SMALL HOUSES

OF THE

DATE GEORGIAN PERIOD

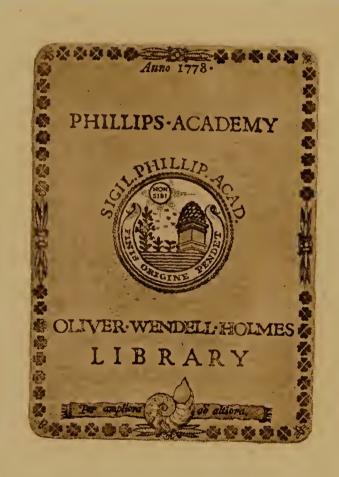
STANLEY C. RAMSEY

AND

I. II. M. LARKEY

Volume II

1923



ADDISON GALLERY COLLECTION







A VASE, PITZHANGER MANOR, EALING.



ENTRANCE HALL, No. 1 BEDFORD SQUARE.

SMALL HOUSES

of the

LATE GEORGIAN PERIOD

1750-1820

VOL. II. DETAILS AND INTERIORS

Stanley C. Ramsey

J. D. M. Harvey

With Fifty Photographs by F. R. Yerbury Secretary of the Architectural Association

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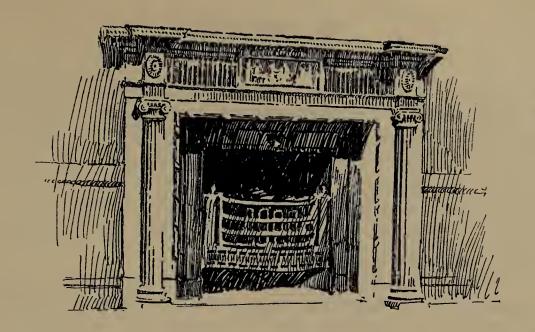
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INTRODUCTION

EVEN those critics who do not love the work of the late Georgian period, and look askance at its "dull, uninteresting façades," will, in their less guarded moments, grudgingly admit that much of the interior decoration of the period has great charm and beauty. The houses of London in particular have been described as "Palaces hidden behind prison walls," and while by no means admitting the truth of this description, we may concede that there is just sufficient appearance of reason in it to make us pause and consider.

We can quite understand that the visitor from the South of France or Italy, accustomed to the expression of his outdoor life in the elevations of his buildings, might be a little chilled by his first view of, say, Bedford Square (one of the most beautiful, as it is one of the most unspoilt, of the London squares), and if he be chilled with the square, he will be positively frozen by Gower Street! But let us take the same visitor into one of these same "dull" houses. For our purpose we cannot do better than start with the first in the square, and if he be the person of taste and refinement we have taken him for, he will quickly respond to the delicate and restrained detail of the fascinating rooms and chambers.

So it is with most of the late eighteenth-century houses; if we admire the chaste severity of their exteriors, we are charmed and entranced by the innate delicacy of their interiors. Particularly is this true of the smaller houses. We may gaze with wonder upon the elegant splendour of a great Adam saloon at Syon House or Moor Park, and we hasten to add our quota of praise to the skill of the architect, but when our visit to the great house is over, we return to our own modest Georgian house, or visit that of a friend, we

are refreshed by the simplicity of the less pretentious dwelling. The small square hall with its gracious staircase, the six-panelled doors with their delicately reeded architraves and neat brass rim locks, the exquisitely proportioned plaster cornices—all have a welcoming and homely air, and as we gratefully rest in front of the old hob grate and admire the proportions and detail of the "Adam" mantelpiece, we feel we understand why he who builds a Versailles must perforce erect a Trianon!

A distinguished American architect once described these smaller Georgian houses as "Models of simplicity with distinction," and they are exactly that; it is this peculiar characteristic of "simplicity with distinction" which differentiates them from all preceding or succeeding works and makes them unique in the history of our domestic architecture.

We have seen how the Palladian tradition persisted until the close of the eighteenth century (see introduction to Vol. 1), how this tradition was modified, if not revolutionized by Robert Adam and his followers, and how the "Colonial" work of America reacted on the architecture of the Mother Country. Adam's clients for the most part were great personages in the fashionable world of his day, and to some extent the capriciousness of all fashionable society is reflected in his work.

After a time one tires of those ornate ceilings and endless arabesques; the very brilliance of the artist dazzles and fatigues.

He was essentially the architect of the large country house and town mansion, but probably the most enduring monument to his memory exists in the great school or tradition he founded, for his influence was immediate and far-reaching, both in this country and America.

Critics complain with some justification that we use the name of "Adam" to describe a multiplicity of works with which he could not conceivably have been connected as if he were the actual author, and though in a literal sense the critics are undoubtedly right in their objection, nevertheless the instinct they condemn is a perfectly sound and natural one.

For if Robert Adam were not the actual author of these buildings, it was his influence which inspired and moulded them, giving that special impress which is so characteristic of his time. If any one man can be said to have created a style, then that one man was Robert Adam.

It is only to-day, when we have shed, or are shedding, the scales which grew over our eyes during the long ugly night of the industrial period, that we can appreciate at their full worth these modest and distinguished homes. Now that we are sufficiently removed from

the panorama of the Classic tradition on these islands we can survey with selective and critical taste the various achievements of the great Classic builders who from the time of Inigo Jones to the early years of the nineteenth century followed one another in continuous and unbroken succession.

We see the vigorous splendour and spaciousness of Inigo Jones's Italianate buildings giving place to the more native genius of Wren's, and these in their turn are followed by the works of Hawksmoor and of that eccentric builder but great artist Vanbrugh down to the days of Sir Robert Taylor, Chambers, and Robert Adam.

These were the men who built the great public buildings and proud domestic palaces, but ever in their wake followed a nameless company of humble builders whose work was to provide habitations for cottager, yeoman, and small country squire.

And if these smaller people, working out of the limelight and far from the plaudits of the great lords and ladies who patronized the famous artists, did not achieve for themselves any great personal or individual distinction, it is certain that by their united efforts they formed a great tradition of sound and beautiful building, the full significance of which we are only just beginning to appreciate.

According to our various tastes and predilections we admire this or that phase of Classical building (unless we be so apathetic that we admire none of it), the spaciousness of Inigo Jones, the broad homeliness of Wren and the early Georgian builders, or the charm and distinction of the later.

As long as we concern ourselves with superficial differences and details we shall be a-quarrelling, but directly we dive deeper and examine principles so surely shall we find ourselves in a wonderful unanimity of agreement.

It is not a question of whether one admires the later Georgian builders and rejects the earlier—loves Adam and hates Wren—despises Vanbrugh and respects Inigo Jones. Rather it is a question of what did these men stand for—what principles of beauty and construction did their buildings exemplify?

We shall continue to walk the endless treadmill of styles and revivals until we leave the particular for the general, and examine principles and movements rather than personalities and details.

At this hour of the clock to concern ourselves with one style—even if it be the later Georgian!—is to stultify our taste and deaden our appreciation.

Indeed, we cannot properly understand any one style or period until we can appreciate at its true value what preceded it and what came after.

The artist is sensitive to all manifestations of beauty, and even if we be absorbed in admiration of some late Georgian building, yet let us not neglect to peep over our shoulder at the earlier rivals of Queen Anne and Tudor times.

This claim for tolerance must not be read as meaning an easy appreciation of anything and everything, but rather a diligent perseverance and unwearying effort to discover the best in all periods. So shall our convictions have the force of a wedge or driving point with the whole weight of artistic achievement throughout the ages behind us.

Such then is the mood in which we should study the works of the period, which is the subject of this book, viewing them with the critical sympathy of the creative artist rather than with the analytical detachment of the purely intellectual critic.

In the selection of the subjects for illustration the aim throughout has been to amplify and explain those shown in the first volume, and where possible interior views of the houses have been chosen for illustration.

As will be seen, many of the elevations of these houses are shown by measured drawings, and detailed photographs of doors, porches, and garden furniture have also been added.

The choice of the subjects for the interior views presented rather greater difficulties, as many of the houses illustrated in the earlier book contained very little, if anything, of outstanding architectural importance, and in some cases really good and interesting interiors had been spoilt by nineteenth-century vandalism.

Whereas, in producing the first volume, it was the intention to illustrate more particularly the small isolated, or detached, house, and as far as possible the country or suburban types, in preference to those of the towns, in this present volume it has been thought advisable to include a rather greater number of town houses, and, in particular, a certain number of London houses.

As far as possible the subjects have been chosen to illustrate the smaller and less ambitious class of house, in contradistinction to the large town house or country mansion, and if in one or two examples details from the larger houses are shown, it is hoped that their inclusion may be justified on the grounds that the simplicity of treatment is such that they might with equal suitability have graced a far smaller type of house.

As was only to have been expected, London as the capital has the finest examples of the interior work of this period.

No. I Bedford Square (see Plates 7–12) is a gem of the first water, and an almost perfect example of what a lesser town house

should be. As we wander through these small but exquisite apartments we are amazed at the fertility of invention and the perfect poise maintained by the architect throughout. Built by Thomas Leverton in 1771, it is one of the most delightful houses in a very delightful square.

As is well known to all students of architecture, Robert Adam wrought considerable changes in the planning of the houses he built as compared with those of his predecessors. He was almost as great an innovator in his planning as in his decoration.

Not only did he learn much from the Romans as to their use of ornament, but he seems to have equally profited by the study of their plans. He, and his brothers, loved the long suites of apartments axially planned, and seemed to have had an almost wilful preference for a circular or octagonal, rather than a square, room. And it is to his example that we owe the fertility of invention, both in decoration and in plan, of the late eighteenth-century designers. They may in their treatment at times have been a little finicking and over-refined, but they were never dull. There is a freshness and candour about their work which recalls the springtime of the Renaissance in Italy, when Brunelleschi burst upon the world with his vision of a new and enchanting beauty.

The last of the English Renaissance builders had something of the spontaneity of the earlier Italians, and before they gave place to the pedantic dullness of the Greek Revivalists or the stodgy heaviness of the Victorian Italianists they evolved a series of buildings which within the limits of their problem cannot be surpassed.

Robert Adam's contemporaries may be divided into two, if not three, Schools. There were those who, like Henry Holland (for an example of whose work see Plate 36), Thomas Leverton and Robert Milne, worked in the Adam manner, and in the opposite camp were the guardians of the Palladian tradition, of whom the chiefs were Sir William Chambers, Sir Robert Taylor, and Carr, of York. Each of these renowned leaders had his own little array of retainers and camp followers, who spread the tradition and fame of their chief.

In the third group may be placed the irregulars—Batty-Langley and the "Gothicists," with Stuart and Revett the heralds of the Greek revival.

The names of the leaders connote the characteristic work of the period, for they may be taken as the heads of the various predominant schools.

Of the Palladian group, Sir William Chambers was the most distinguished architect of his generation. He was in every way the opposite of Robert Adam. Whereas Adam was for the most part

A

concerned with domestic architecture in erecting houses for the "nobility and gentry," Chambers did very little in the way of house-building, but was, on the contrary, much concerned with public and semi-public work.

It is said that Chambers hated Adam and all his works—the conservative traditionalist against the aristocratic revolutionary—it is certain that Chambers succeeded in keeping Adam out of the Royal Academy, and it was probably owing to Sir William's opposition that Robert Adam escaped the doubtful distinction of a title!

The study of these two men, both in their contrasting characters and in their work, is extremely interesting.

They both published books for the edification and instruction of the public and their brother architects, and here again we see the difference between the two men in their choice of subjects.

Chambers's work, "A Treatise on Civil Architecture," laid down the rules and regulations to be observed by the Classic builders who followed humbly in the steps of Palladio, Inigo Jones, and Sir William Chambers; whilst Adam, with due Scottish modesty, published a complete edition of his own works and designs!

Chambers's great life-work was the building of Somerset House. He has been called a cold and frigid architect by many critics who compare his gracious reserve with the more characteristically English spontaneity of Wren, with his large free gestures, disdain of detail, and truly British compromise on principles.

Wren is, and will always be, the great national architect, and if in the light of his lantern Chambers's own little candle burns somewhat less brightly, nevertheless, Chambers was a very accomplished architect, and his work was a very necessary and useful corrective to the ornamental exuberance of that of the brothers Adam.

As was only to be expected, the work of both schools reacted on one another, and it is probably owing to this "meeting of the waters" that the work which immediately followed that of Chambers and Adam, chiefly in regard to the smaller houses, and particularly in America, was so simply satisfying and original.

If either of these rival schools had greatly predominated, the result would have been vastly different. With too much Chambers we should have had another period of domestic dullness comparable to that which immediately followed Wren, or, to come nearer to our own time, comparable to the effect of the "Classic" houses which immediately followed the early Victorian.

On the other hand, if Robert Adam had held undisputed sway, the chances are that the latter work of the eighteenth century would have frittered itself away in mere ornamentation and prettiness.

Chambers, as we know, did very little purely domestic work, and was probably much too busy on his public buildings to concern himself with small houses—the room illustrated on Plates 16 and 17, from a house in Berners Street, though there is no direct evidence (as far as I know) that it was designed by him, is in his manner.

We know that about the time this house was built (1767) Chambers was living in this locality, and it is quite probable that he actually designed this soberly attractive apartment.

A rather interesting example of the fusion of the "Palladian" and "Adam" traditions is seen in the decoration of the drawing-room from Kent House, Hammersmith Mall (Plate 33), where the ceiling and details generally bear evidence of Adam influence, whilst the fireplace is conceived more in the manner of Chambers.

Amongst the "Palladianists" who carried out a great deal of domestic work is Sir Robert Taylor. See Asgill House, Richmond (Plates 26–30 in this volume and Plate 31, vol. I), and Thorncroft Manor, Leatherhead (Plate 33, vol. I).

Taylor was a conscientious architect, whose best work is not without a certain distinction, and at times even of originality—as, for example, the fireplace from Asgill House, illustrated on Plate 30. But, generally speaking, his work is a little tight and cramped—it has neither the robust conviction of Chambers nor the delicate charm of Adam. He was a useful "general of division," who could always be depended upon for a perfectly sound and creditable performance without in any way displaying great gifts of leadership or originality of thought.

To conclude with our gallery of famous eighteenth-century architects, we next come to a very different type of artist in Sir John Soane.

Soane is one of those architects, examples of which occur in all countries at different times, who have probably suffered as much from the extravagant praises of their admirers as from the depreciation of hostile critics.

At one time it was the fashion to regard him as the exponent of all that was false and theatrical in architecture. The pendulum has now swung to the other extreme, and his reputation is in danger of being permanently damaged by a wave of unreasoning enthusiasm.

To parody a cynicism attributed to Disraeli, it might be said of Soane's work that it contained much that was true and much that was original, but unfortunately that which was true was not original and that which was original was not true.

By the end of the eighteenth century the great Classic tradition had become a little thin and attenuated. Disturbing elements were

at work, and one sometimes feels that Soane was a sort of architectural Canute, vainly striving to keep back the waves of the disintegrating forces.

There is one aspect of Sir John Soane that will appeal greatly to all modern architects, and that is when one views him as a collector. Soane was a mighty collector both of the works of his contemporaries and of the works of the artists of the past. To-day everyone seems to be a collector—the shop of the antique dealer is to be found in almost every town of any size throughout the country; but we very seldom collect contemporary work. Disgusted with the fatuities of the nineteenth century we are, as it were, seeking frantically to establish a better standard of taste, to gather round us such a collection of beautiful objects that the next generation will possibly accept them as a matter of course, and will then, with eyes trained by the work of the older artists, give rein to the joy of creative effort.

Of Soane's domestic work, the house which he built for himself in Lincoln's Inn Fields (now the Soane Museum) is probably the best known, both to architects and the general public.

It is an interesting mixture of archæology and originality. As we walk through those intercommunicating chambers with their queer umbrella-shaped ceilings, we cannot but admire the ingenuity of the author; for a museum to house an intimate personal collection it is ideal; but as a home it lacks many home-like features.

Pitzhanger Manor at Ealing, now the Ealing Public Library, though not so well known as the Lincoln's Inn building, is in many respects a much finer house and certainly a more comfortable one to live in.

The original house was built by George Dance, junior, in whose office Soane worked, but whilst Soane retained the south wing containing the drawing-room and dining-room which he very much admired (see Plates 42–44 and 92–97), he pulled down the rest of Dance's house and rebuilt the manor on the lines we see there to-day.

Soane's work, like so much of Adam's, suffers from over-elaboration—the amount of interest and detail put into the design of Soane's town residence could with advantage be spread over a dozen houses, instead of being confined to one.

And though this was an error of judgment as far as the simpler type of domestic work was concerned, we can learn much from the study of individual doors, mantelpieces, etc. In fact, both Adam and Soane have this in common, that their work is a perfect mine of inspiration for their followers, who, selecting with greater judgment, or kept in severe check by lack of funds, did in many instances produce work of a sounder artistic worth than that of their masters.

From the very earliest days of the Renaissance, the English builders have paid great attention to the entrance hall. Both Inigo Jones and Wren spent infinite pains to attain a fine entrance, and both architects seem to have had a preference for halls running through two stories with a gallery round. One of the finest examples of a hall of this kind is to be seen at the Queen's House, Greenwich, built by Inigo Jones for Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I.

In this house, and in many of the houses built in the succeeding centuries, the staircase is found in another apartment adjacent, but in close proximity, to the entrance hall.

In the smaller houses of the late Georgian period—possibly for reasons of economy—the staircase is usually found leading from the entrance hall and forming its most important feature (see Plate I, Mottram Hall, Cheshire).

These apartments are frequently square or oblong on plan, in some of the more important houses circular or oval, and it is not until we are well into the nineteenth century that we find the roomy entrance hall has been almost entirely superseded by the dark and stuffy passage entrance which seems to have such a peculiar attraction for lodging-house keepers. As is only to be expected, the use of the Classic order in various shapes and sizes is to be found in one place or another throughout these late eighteenth-century houses.

In the entrance halls we frequently find the "Order" used in connexion with a simple arcade, such as that at Greycourt, Ham, or as a pilaster forming part of a wall arcade, as in the entrance hall at Kent House, Hammersmith Mall (see Plate 4).

The early Georgian builders seem to have had a great liking for the Roman Ionic order, with the volutes of the capitals set diagonally, but Robert Adam and the later designers fought rather shy of this type, and, when they used this order, confined themselves to a more Grecian variety of the Ionic. For the most part they appear to have preferred either some variant of the Corinthian for their more elaborate work or the Doric in all its phases. In fact, for the simple work and the smaller houses, there is no doubt that the Doric order is first favourite. This is probably due as much to motives of economy as to suitability of shape and design. It is, of course, the simplest of all the orders, and so appropriately goes with simple work.

The floors of these entrance halls were frequently made of large squares of black and white marble or stone laid either square or diagonally, though examples are to be found, particularly in the later houses built at the end of the century, of more elaborate patterns including Greek keys and wave ornaments.

In some of Adam's larger houses are to be seen wonderful examples of this artist's treatment as exemplified in the hall with its richly coffered ceiling, elaborate arcading, and decorated niches filled with vases or sculpture.

A good example of Soane's treatment of an entrance hall is to be seen at Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing (Plate 3), which, like most of Soane's work at this house, is simpler in design and conception than his other houses, and for that reason more domestic.

A very fine example of a comparatively small entrance hall treated with consummate skill is that at No. I Bedford Square, by Thomas Leverton, which forms the subject of the frontispiece. Here we have an example of shallow arches and flat saucer-like dome which seems to suggest an intelligent anticipation of one of Soane's favourite combinations, but how different in spirit from Soane's work!

Everything about Leverton's design is quiet and distinguished. We feel none of that straining after effect, that wilful eccentricity, which is so disturbing a factor in the designs of his successor. Possibly Soane's work is more archæologically correct, but how far removed from the domestic repose of Leverton's?

Many of these late eighteenth-century entrance halls have their walls treated with "marbling," a process which, together with that of "graining," was greatly abused in the succeeding century, and so fell into disrepute.

An interesting example of this "marbling" treatment is to be seen in the entrance hall at Kent House, Hammersmith Mall, already referred to.

Other examples of marbling treatment with scagliola columns, etc., are to be found in the halls of certain houses in Bedford Square. In some cases marble wall-paper of a particularly delightful shade of yellow and brown was used—very different from the horrible marbled papers which are now usually only seen in kitchens and bathrooms. It is rather interesting to note that of late years efforts have been made in Paris to reproduce these marbled papers in their original eighteenth-century colours.

Another interesting example of an entrance hall and staircase treatment is to be seen in a house in Pall Mall designed by Sir John Soane (see Plate 53). Probably Soane is seen here at his best. The design is an honest, straightforward piece of work without any of the freakishness and whimsicalities to be seen both at Pitzhanger and at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The next feature to be considered in the internal design of these houses is the main staircase, which, as I have said, frequently forms an integral part of the design for the entrance hall.

The open-newel staircase, since Elizabethan and Jacobean days, has always been one of the chief glories of English houses.

In Sir Christopher Wren's time the design of the staircase underwent very radical changes, and the Classic staircase as used throughout the eighteenth century is really a refinement and adaptation of his motives.

Wren very frequently used a stone staircase with wrought-iron balusters or balustrade, finished with mahogany handrail, though it is probably not correct to say that he was the first architect to use the stone staircase, as previously Inigo Jones had used this form of stair at the Queen's House, Greenwich.

The use of stone profoundly influenced the design of wooden stairs, and it became the custom to introduce the cut string in imitation of the stone forms. There is a very interesting example of a wooden stair in the early part of Greenwich Hospital, in which the treads are square in shape instead of the spandrel form of later days. This staircase clearly shows traces of a stone prototype.

Both in Inigo Jones's and Wren's days it was the custom for the handrail to run in straight flights, and to stop between heavy newels, but afterwards, in the early Georgian times, this handrail, supported by either twisted or moulded balusters, followed the line of the staircase by a series of ramps. Gradually, as time went on, the handrail became finer in design, and the thick balusters of the earlier architects gave place in the wooden staircases to the finely turned mahogany balusters of the later men, whilst the handrail frequently followed one continuous sweep. Particularly in the town houses, the use of the stone staircase with the iron balustrade is very usual. An interesting example of this is seen in a house by Isaac Ware at the corner of Bloomsbury Square.

Probably the most graceful and refined of these wrought-iron staircases are to be found in the houses which were built from about 1750 to 1780. There is a very fine example of such a staircase designed by Sir Robert Taylor for No. 35 Lincoln's Inn Fields, now to be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Afterwards the balustrading became much more simple in outline, such as seen in Soane's staircase in the house in Pall Mall already referred to.

The Greek Revivalists who followed Soane very frequently used a delicate cast-iron baluster decorated with acanthus or honeysuckle ornament.

As throughout all the details of the Classic period, the "Order" is used in various forms in these staircases. Sometimes there is a

Doric column forming a newel at the end of the staircase, and in other examples a thin Doric column on top of a vase is used for a baluster, particularly in the earlier examples.

An interesting type of wooden staircase is to be seen in Walpole House, Chiswick Mall (see Plate 2). It is rather earlier in date than most of the houses we have under consideration, but forms an interesting link between Queen Anne and the later Georgian examples. Following this we get such a staircase as is to be seen at "Oare" in Wiltshire (see Plate 5), which, although later in date, has much in common with the Walpole House staircase.

The use of the thin iron square baluster in connexion with the stone stairs found its echo in the wooden staircase by the use of a similar baluster in wood. This form came into very general use for the smaller and less expensive houses somewhere about 1780, and, possibly owing to its very cheapness, it became almost universal for the small house in Regency and earlier Victorian days.

If used discriminately with interesting newels and a well-designed handrail, this form of baluster can be made to look very effective; but, as was frequently the case in the early nineteenth century, when it was employed without much thought and mainly on the ground of saving expense, the appearance of the staircase became thin and attenuated, and lost much of the charm of the earlier examples.

In the earlier Georgian staircase where the cut string is employed the spandrel end is frequently finished with very elaborate carved brackets, which, at the end of the century, gave place to a simpler type of bracket such as that of the staircase at Kent House, Hammersmith Mall (Plate 4), where the ornament is in very low relief, or alternatively, as is found in a good many examples, the ornament is entirely omitted.

This staircase also shows the way the handrail was wreathed round at the bottom and supported on a series of small balusters with central newel in the shape of a slim Doric column.

An important feature in connexion with the entrance hall is the treatment of the front door, which may, or may not, have a very important influence on the design of the hall itself.

Rober Adam and his followers were very successful in the use of a beautiful type of lead-glazed fanlight, which was not infrequently carried down on either side of the door in panels. An example of this may be seen on Plate 3, which is the entrance door to No. 35 Bedford Square, and also on Plate 35 of Volume No. 1.

Next in importance to the entrance hall and staircase come the fireplaces of the principal living-rooms.

The fireplace in Tudor and late Gothic times was generally nothing more than a decorated hole in the wall finished with a simple stone surround, sometimes in the form of a four-centred arch against which the oak panelling of the room was framed. In Jacobean and Elizabethan times the fireplace with the wall over became a much more glorious affair, frequently framed in free standing "Orders" of elaborate design. The panelling over was treated with intricate strap-work ornament; but the actual fireplace opening itself was still a hole in the wall for burning wood logs on iron dogs.

In Carolean and Queen Anne days the fireplace reverted to a simpler and more natural treatment.

Wren was frequently content with either a wood or marble bolection moulding round his fireplace opening with wood panelling framed against it, somewhat on Tudor lines, but of a very different design, and not infrequently carving of the Grinling Gibbon's type was introduced in the wall panelling over the fireplace.

As the fireplace developed in Georgian days the "Order" was frequently used in some form or other in connexion with the design of the fireplace surround.

Interesting examples of the late Palladian treatment of fireplaces are to be seen in Plate 33, at Kent House, Hammersmith Mall, and at 21 Berners Street (Plate 16). It is interesting to compare these fireplaces with those designed by Robert Adam and his followers. Such as, for example, the fireplaces from a house in Hatton Garden and at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith (Plates 39–40), where the use of the thin delicate "Order" with beautifully enriched mouldings and exquisite low relief ornament afford examples of the Classic English fireplace in the full glory of the culminating period.

These late eighteenth-century fireplaces are amongst the most typical features of the houses of that date. Probably Robert Adam himself spent more time and took more trouble over the design of his fireplaces than over any other features in his houses. In addition to the carved wood mantelpiece decorated with low relief, such as, for example, that from a house in Edinburgh (shown on Plate 41), Adam loved to use all kinds of marble with carved panels, brackets, and orders enriched by the use of simple bands of inlaid marble of a different colour.

Some twenty or thirty years ago these late eighteenth-century fireplaces could be acquired for a mere song, but, fortunately, their artistic value is very much better appreciated to-day, and it is not unusual to find in the lease of the London houses descriptions of these fireplaces and a clause forbidding the tenant to alter or remove them,

and any substitution is guarded against by the attachment of photographs of the fireplace referred to.

The use of marble during the later part of the eighteenth century for the fireplace surround is to be found even in the very smallest houses. Of course, the design was correspondingly more simple. The use of flat-reeded architraves with simple rosettes at the corners and plain reeded shelf over is the most usual form.

A very attractive and inexpensive mantelpiece extensively used throughout this period is the wooden fireplace surround enriched with composition ornament, and innumerable examples are to be found in this country and in the colonial work of America which testify to the fertile imagination of their designers. Small panels containing groups of cupids or other Classic mythological figures are frequently to be seen in the centre of the frieze, or over the ends of pilasters, surrounded with mouldings decorated in low relief. Vases, wreaths, swags, together with conventional treatment of bunches of grapes and wheatsheaves are alternative subjects for decoration.

The shelf itself, as with the more simple marble ones, is not infrequently finished with a reeded edge, but in the more elaborate examples this shelf is moulded and has a bed-mould, sometimes composed of several members enriched by dentils, leaf and tongue ornament, etc., or in some cases with an elaborate form of pear-drop ornament. As an example of this wood and composition treatment, see measured drawing of fireplace from a house in the Paragon at Blackheath, Plate 66.

The fireplace opening itself was very generally finished with simple slabs of marble some 6 in. wide at the sides and top immediately adjacent to the wooden surround.

In the earlier examples the open fire with iron dogs is still found, but Robert Adam and his school were responsible for the introduction of the very beautiful types of basket and hob-grates which were used so extensively throughout the last half of the eighteenth century.

These grates are triumphs of the metal-workers' art, and for beauty of finish and delicacy of design can only be compared to certain Louis XVI and "Empire" grates to be found in France.

About this time, too, fenders came into general use, a very typical form being that of pierced steel or brass, sometimes the two metals being used in combination.

In Regency and earlier Victorian days the use of brass mountings and enrichments were also employed for the decoration of the grate itself.

There was, during the latter half of the eighteenth century and the earlier years of the nineteenth, a slight but marked influence due to French design. We realize this particularly when we study certain articles of furniture designed by Robert Adam, and we see it again in connexion with fireplaces of the Regency and earlier Victorian days. An example of this influence may be seen in the fireplace of Lincoln's Inn Fields (see Plate 35).

No detail of the house was considered too mean for the attention of these late eighteenth-century architects and designers—fenders, bell-pulls, door furniture, all received consideration at their hands. One feature in which they particularly gloried was the treatment of mirrors. Many fine examples of designs for mirrors are to be found in Robert Adam's book on his own work.

The late Georgian builders do not appear to have been so fond of wood panelling for the finishing of their rooms as the earlier Georgian. Plaster-work during this period made great advances. These late eighteenth-century houses contain a wealth of delicate and refined plaster-work.

One very favourite *motif* is to be found in the introduction of classic figures in panels on the wall over the fireplace, set off with swags or foliated ornament in low relief (see Plates 55–56). The upper part of the walls themselves were not infrequently treated with broad, simple panelling formed with plaster mouldings, the mouldings themselves being small in scale and sometimes enriched. The lower part of the wall was finished as a plain dado with a moulded chair rail. This chair rail frequently taking the form of a running dentil course, or delicately moulded leaf and tongue work finished with a plain fascia and small cyma.

The treatment of the walls was very carefully considered in relation to the design of the ceiling, which came next in importance to the design of the fireplace, the centre of interest in the room.

The earlier plaster ceilings of Inigo Jones and Wren were much heavier in design, with endless bands of foliage and with strongly marked cofferings and mouldings. The earlier Georgian architects continued with variations of these themes, but the later men were much more revolutionary. Here there was no suggestion of plaster imitating stone forms. The lowest of low relief was used, and the most conventional of patterns.

In the design of the best ceilings of this period, as with all the other details of the late eighteenth-century house, the influence of Robert Adam is all-powerful.

If we compare a genuine Adam ceiling—such as the ceiling of St. James's club-house, formerly Coventry House, Piccadilly (see

Plate 49), or the ceiling of No. 3 Adelphi Terrace (see Plate 48)—with those at Nos. 1 and 2 Bedford Square, this influence will easily be understood.

Many of the more important ceilings had small panels painted by Angelica Kauffmann and her disciples, and even to-day, some 140 years after they were painted, these panels, though somewhat mellowed by the hand of time, are still extraordinarily vivid in colour and tone.

It is a useful experience actually to measure some of the mouldings and plaster-work of these ceilings, and it will come as a surprise to many to find how small the various members are.

The juncture of the ceiling with the wall received the most careful consideration. In some cases, as in the drawing-room to No. I Bedford Square (see Plate 12), the ceiling treatment is continued on to the wall itself with a small frieze decorated with low relief ornament of a conventional kind. Personally, I do not feel that this example is altogether satisfactory, and in my opinion the design of the room would have been better if this particular frieze had been omitted.

Other examples of frieze treatments, but with rather happier effect, are to be seen on Plate 50, from another house in the square.

Two very interesting examples of ceilings are to be seen in a house in Dublin (see Plate 45), which are very different in inception from those we have been looking at. Here there is a strong French influence dating from the rococo work of Louis XV. Another ceiling which shows traces of French influence is to be seen in the view of the room at No. 21 Berners Street (see Plate 16).

There is often a good deal of confusion of thought between the essential characteristics of Louis XIV and Louis XV work. Louis XIV decoration was, like Louis XIV himself, imposing and dominating in character, more suited to the magnificent salon of a great palace than the intimate apartment of a private house, but the best of the Louis XV work which followed—although much more capricious than that of the preceding period—has a delicacy and charm which peculiarly confines it to the decoration of small and intimate apartments.

Probably the greatest contrast between an early Georgian and late Georgian house, and one which will immediately strike the attention of the most casual beholder, is the difference in the colour schemes employed.

The principle rooms of a Queen Anne and earlier Georgian house were generally panelled with a dark oak, such as we see in Wren's work at Hampton Court, or in pine wood panelling painted a dark

green with the enrichments in some cases picked out in gold; or as an alternative scheme these early Georgian houses had their panelling and walls painted white or cream colour. The later architects preferred colours of a much lower tone, and here again we see the influence of the French. Walls painted café-au-lait, light greys, and dove colours, or light greens and blues predominated.

Ceilings were for the most part kept white or cream, and in the more important examples had their enrichments picked out in gold, with the little painted panels already described worked in as part of the general scheme. Painted panels were not confined to the ceiling, but were occasionally used also for wall decorations, such as the example at the octagonal room, Asgill House (see Plate 28), and in Boodle's Clubhouse (see Plate 37).

In the entrance hall to Asgill House there are some very interesting examples of grisaille painting. Unfortunately, owing to difficulties of lighting, it was impossible to obtain an adequate photograph of this hall. Soane and the early nineteenth-century architects frequently introduced darker colours in the form of tuscan red, terra-cotta, pompeian greens, blue, and yellows into their decoration.

Wall-papers were very largely used in the smaller houses and cottages. The design of these papers generally reflected either Eastern influences, in the form of Chinese design on glazed paper or followed some native chintz pattern of little flowers or trellis work diapered over a light ground.

Another very important feature in these houses was the treatment of the doors and the door surrounds. The six-panelled door of the earlier Georgians continued its popularity, although the mouldings were slightly reduced in size and frequently the raised panel was omitted. Occasionally reedings took the place of mouldings, and in some of the later doors ebony inlay was introduced.

Some of the most beautiful doors in the more important houses are of polished mahogany with panels formed of fluted margins having low relief rosettes at the corners.

Sir William Chambers and the Palladianists frequently used an "Order" with entablature over for the surround of their doors, or a simple architrave with enriched pulvinated frieze and cornice over. See, for example, door to dining-room, Asgill House, Richmond (Plate 27), and doorway to Ely House, Dover Street (Plate 14), both designed by Sir Robert Taylor.

On the other hand, Adam, Leverton, and others seem to have preferred the use of brackets, usually of a slight projection, with low relief ornament in place of such orders to carry pediments or

cornices over their doors. Plate 13 shows two very beautiful doors from Kenwood, Middlesex. Although Kenwood cannot be called a "small" house, these two doors are excellent examples of a type of door, more or less ornate, which were used in innumerable small houses throughout the country. These remarks also apply to the door from Harewood House, Hanover Square, now, unfortunately, demolished, which is also another authentic Adam door.

In connexion with the doors some little attention should be given to the very excellent metalwork in the shape of door furniture that was used. In the smaller houses we find simple brass rim locks with plain, round, or drop handles of the same material, whilst in the doors of the larger houses there is to be found chased and gilt door furniture of a very exquisite character.

In the first volume some reference was made to the influence of Batty Langley and the Gothic Romanticists. Their work is less in evidence in interior decoration than in exterior. We find this influence chiefly reflected in the use of those interlacing glazing bars in the fronts of bookcases and cupboards, so much beloved by the late eighteenth-century architect and furniture maker.

Eighteenth-century furniture, if not actually designed by the architects, was largely inspired by them. They were particularly successful in their provision and treatment of cupboards. Cupboards should be designed in connexion with the planning and decoration of the room, and with some regard to the particular places they have to fill. They are not infrequently amongst the most pleasing and memorable of the features of an old house.

As an example of a particularly fine built-in piece of furniture see Plate 51, which shows a bookcase in the form of a series of shelves designed by Robert Adam. The last half of the eighteenth century was also the culminating period in English furniture.

The walnut furniture of William and Mary and Queen Anne had given place to the mahogany of Chippendale, which in its turn was followed by the elegant pieces of Sheraton and Hepplewhite, afterwards to be superseded by the less interesting work of Vulliamy and the men of the Regency, who, accepting the tradition of the architecture of their time, showed less of natural craftsmanship and more of research in their work.

To again mention Robert Adam—from whom one cannot escape when dealing with this period—one has only to turn to his book of designs to see what a great interest he took in furniture and accessories. Amongst other innovations he introduced a particularly fascinating form of painted furniture. In this respect he was followed by Hepplewhite and a great many other craftsmen of the

period who produced very many useful and simple pieces, such as chairs, sofas, card-tables, etc., of painted or lacquered wood enriched with floral or figured decoration painted in contrasting colours.

Some of the most striking of this furniture was made of rose and satinwood veneers on a framework of white wood or mahogany. Towards the end of the century veneers of all descriptions, including finely figured mahoganies, were used extensively.

In connexion with the furnishing of these rooms some mention must be made of curtains and window treatments, which received very careful attention at the hands of both architect and decorator.

In the simpler houses plain valance boards with curtains and valances of either chintz or silk damask were used, but in the more elaborate wonderfully designed window-heads of carved and gilt wood or plaster-work were used to cover the valance boards and form a finish to the curtains.

Gradually the glories of the eighteenth century house craftsmanship gave place to the trivialities of the early Victorian, and finally flickered out in the vagaries of the Italian revival.

The Industrial Age was upon us, and it was to be many long years before we were again to see anything worthy to rank with the English house of the later Georgian period.

During the last thirty years or so there has been a revival of better methods in the building and designing of our domestic dwellings, both in this country and America.

Our own Georgian revival has reacted upon the revival of colonial work in the States, and the American colonial work is to-day in its turn making its influence felt on our own practice. It is evident to the most casual observer that in late years, both here and on the other side of the Atlantic, a renewed and vigorous interest is being taken in the houses and furniture of the late eighteenth century, an interest which, it is hoped, the work shown in this book may do something to stimulate and develop still further.

STANLEY C. RAMSEY.





ENTRANCE HALL, MOTTRAM HALL, CHESHIRE.





STAIRCASE, WALPOLE HOUSE, CHISWICK MALL.







ENTRANCE, No. 35 BEDFORD SQUARE.







ENTRANCE HALL, GRAY COURT, HAM.



STAIRCASE, "OARE," PEWSEY, WILTS.









ENTRANCE HALL, No. 1 BEDFORD SQUARE.





THE STAIRCASE, No. 1 BEDFORD SQUARE.





DINING-ROOM, No. 1 BEDFORD SQUARE.





DINING-ROOM, No. 1 BEDFORD SQUARE.





A CHIMNEYPIECE IN No. 1 BEDFORD SQUARE.

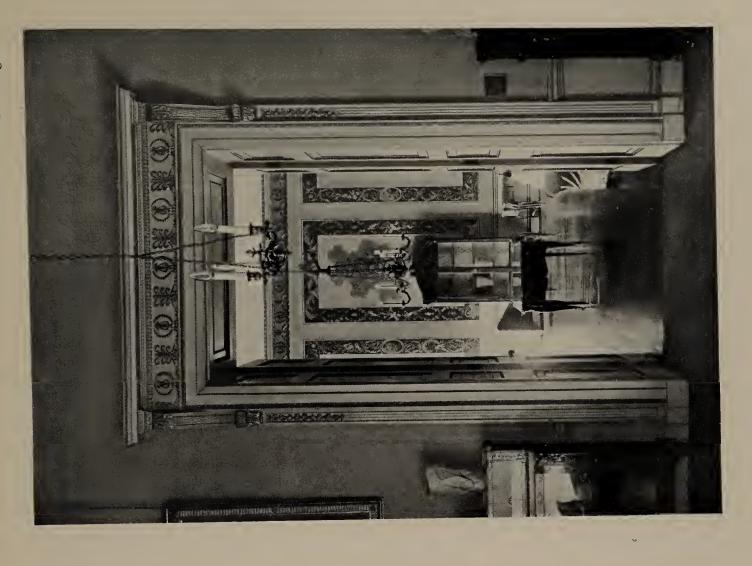


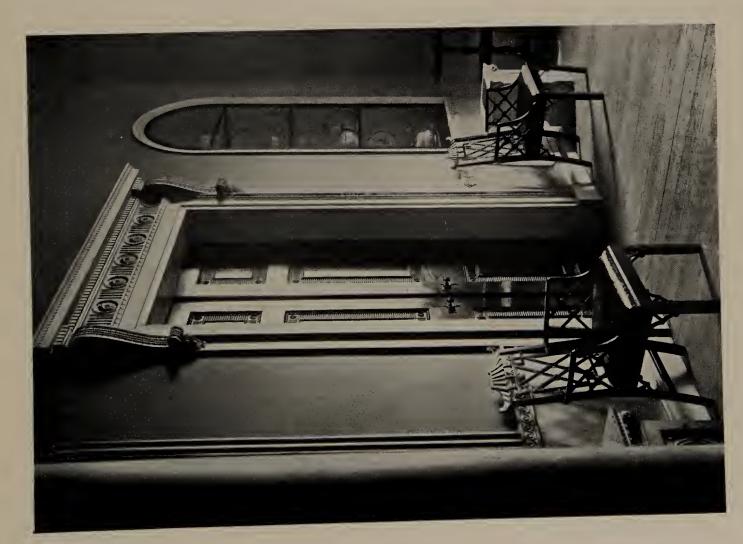




DRAWING-ROOM, No. 1 BEDFORD SQUARE.











DINING-ROOM DOORWAY, ELY HOUSE, DOVER STREET, LONDON. SIR ROBERT TAYLOR, ARCHITECT.





STAIRCASE HALL, ELY HOUSE, DOVER STREET, LONDON, W.





21 BERNERS STREET, W.





DOORWAY IN 21 BERNERS STREET, LONDON.





DOORWAY AT HAREWOOD HOUSE, HANOVER SQUARE, LONDON. (Now Demolished.)





STAIRCASE, EAST CLIFF HOUSE, HASTINGS.





No. 2 BEDFORD SQUARE.





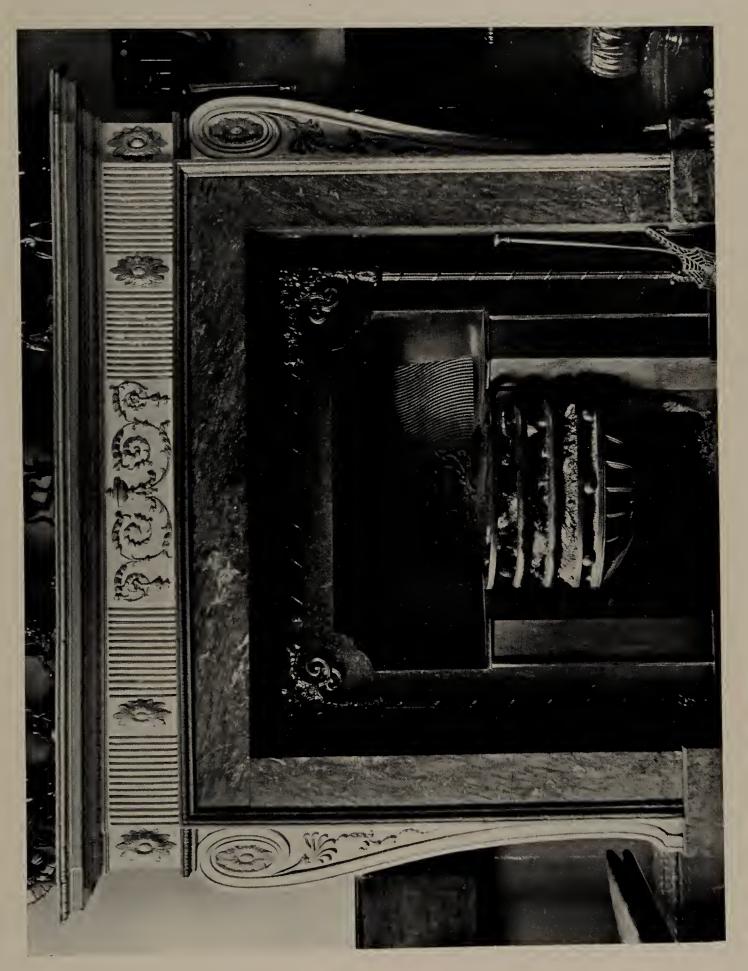
DRAWING-ROOM, 13 BEDFORD SQUARE.





CARVED WOOD CHIMNEYPIECE (NOW IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).





CHIMNEY-PIECE FROM AN OLD HOUSE IN CANONBURY PLACE, LONDON.





END BAY OF DRAWING-ROOM, STONE HOUSE, LEWISHAM.





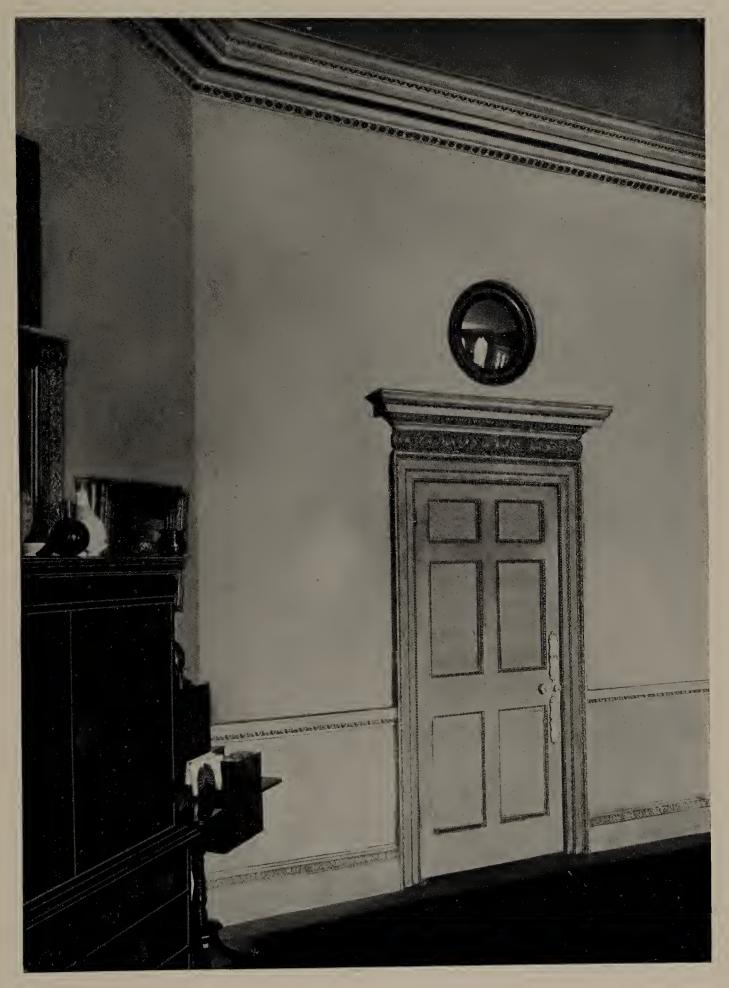
DRAWING-ROOM, STONE HOUSE, LEWISHAM.





ASGILL HOUSE, RICHMOND.





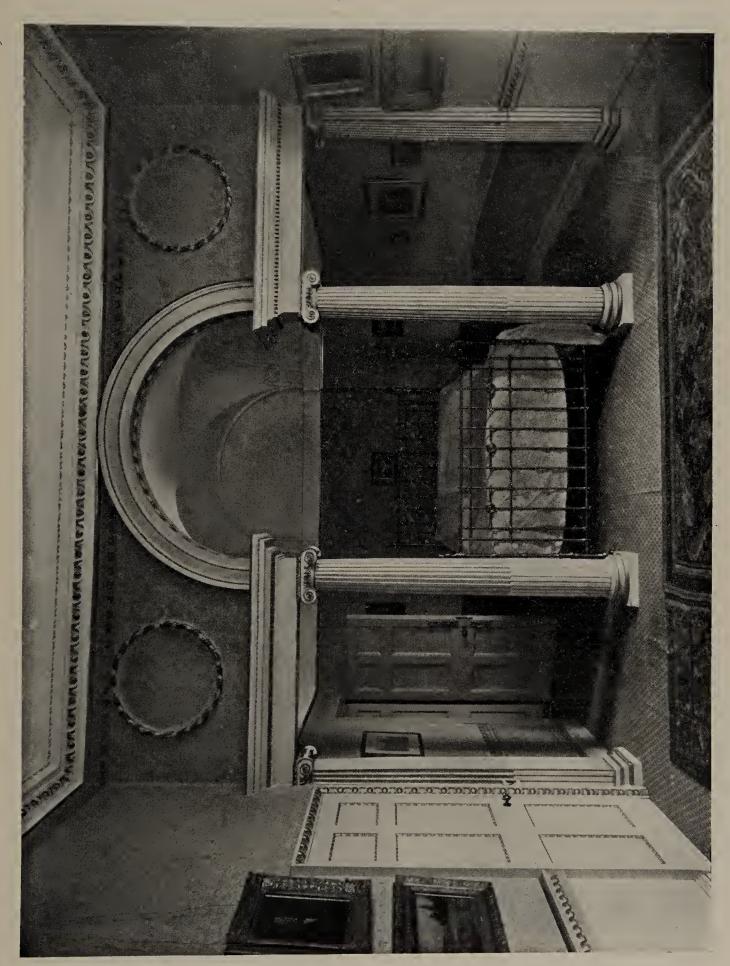
A DOORWAY, ASGILL HOUSE, RICHMOND.





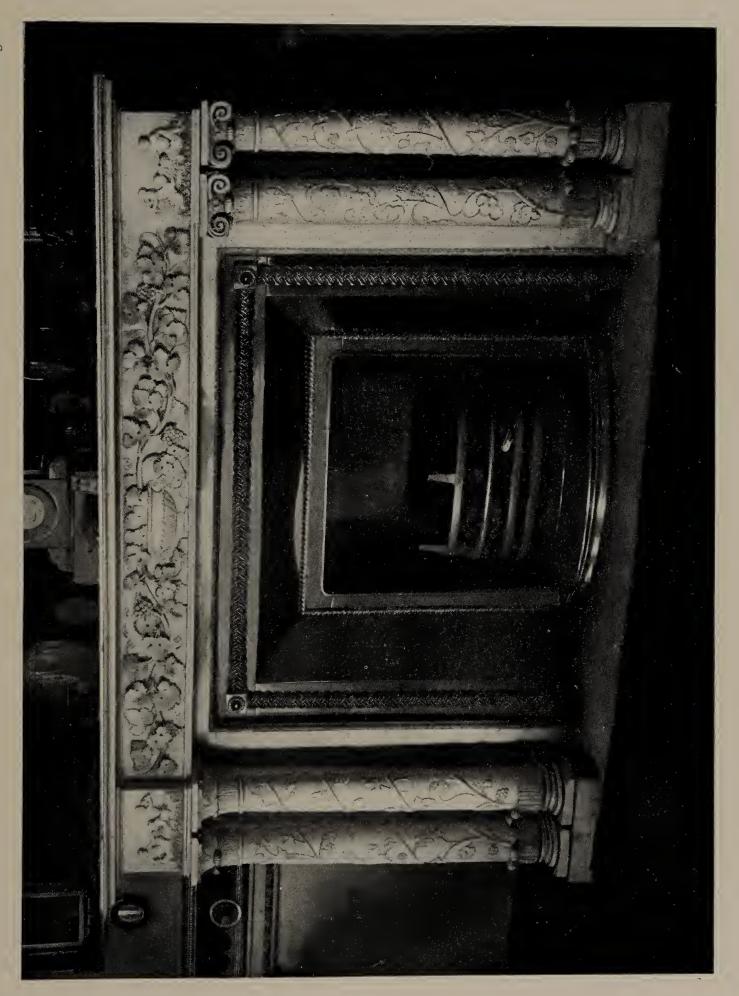
ASGILL HOUSE, RICHMOND.





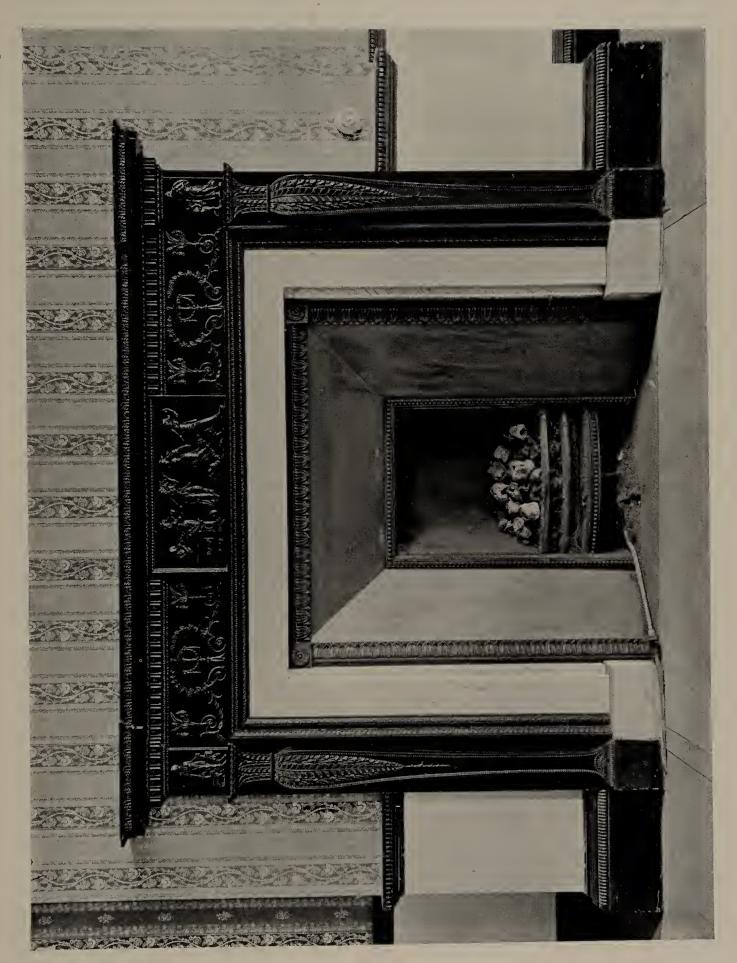
BEDROOM IN ASGILL HOUSE, RICHMOND.





FIREPLACE AT ASGILL HOUSE, RICHMOND.





MANTELPIECE IN A HOUSE AT SHEEN, NEAR RICHMOND, SURREY





FIREPLACE IN WALPOLE HOUSE, CHISWICK MALL.





FIREPLACE IN KENT HOUSE, HAMMERSMITH MALL.





London Survey Committee.

Photograph by A. H. Blake.

ARCHWAY ON FIRST FLOOR, 91 CHEYNE WALK, CHELSEA.



DETAIL OF STAIRCASE, GRAY COURT, HAM.





WINDOW IN THE PREMISES OF GILL & REIGATE, LTD., THE SOHO GALLERIES.



L.C.C. Photograph.

FIREPLACE FROM 51 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.





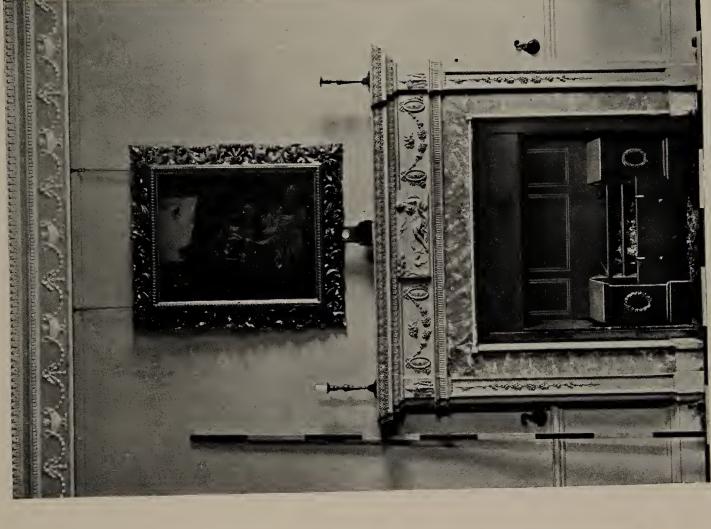
THE LARGE SMOKING-ROOM, BROOKS'S CLUB HOUSE, LONDON.

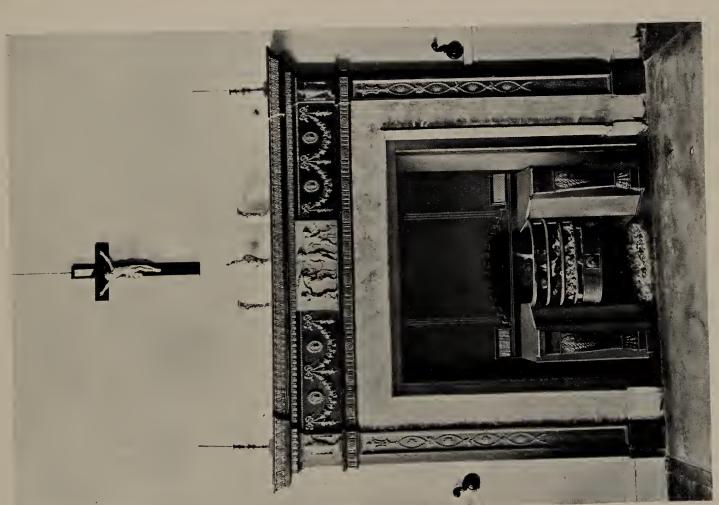




THE SALOON, BOODLE'S CLUB HOUSE, LONDON.







FIREPLACES IN No. 7 GREAT GEORGE STREET, BRISTOL.





London Survey Committee.

Photograph by Edward Yates.

KELMSCOTT HOUSE, HAMMERSMITH MALL. FIREPLACE IN DINING-ROOM.





CHIMNEY-PIECE FROM A HOUSE IN HATTON GARDEN, LONDON.





CARVED PINE FIREPLACE, FORMERLY IN A HOUSE IN EDINBURGH.





PITZHANGER MANOR, EALING.



PITZHANGER MANOR, EALING.





STAIRCASE, PITZHANGER MANOR, EALING.





PITZHANGER MANOR, EALING.





CEILING, BELVEDERE HOUSE, DUBLIN.

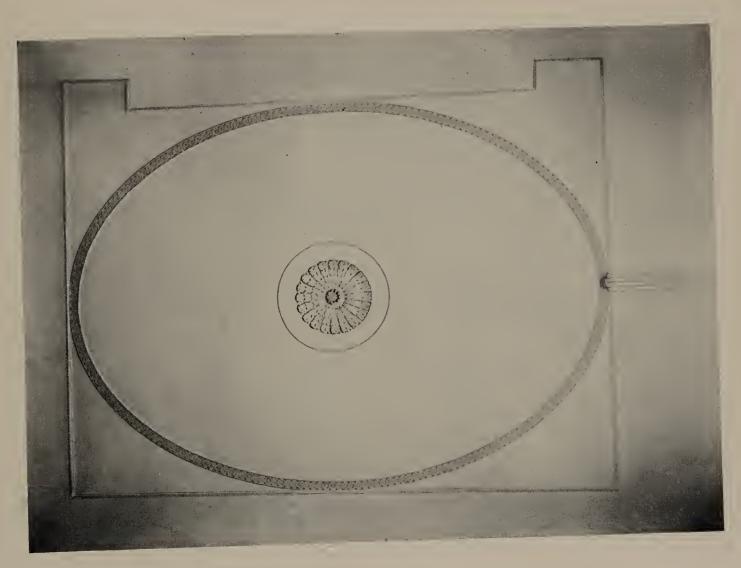


ST. STEPHEN'S CLUB, DUBLIN. DETAIL OF CEILING.



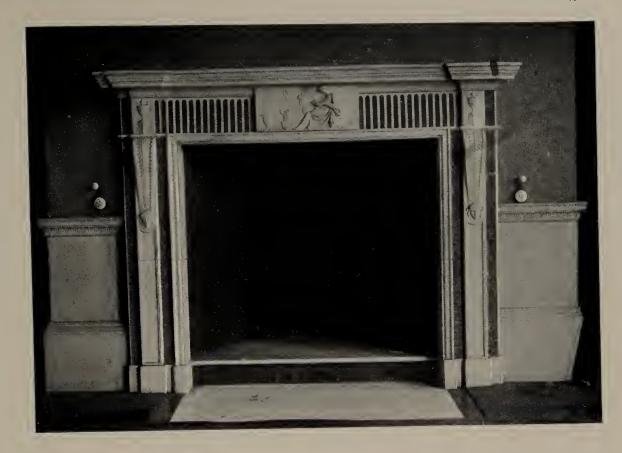


CEILING AT KENT HOUSE, HAMMERSMITH.



CEILING AT No. 2 BEDFORD SQUARE.

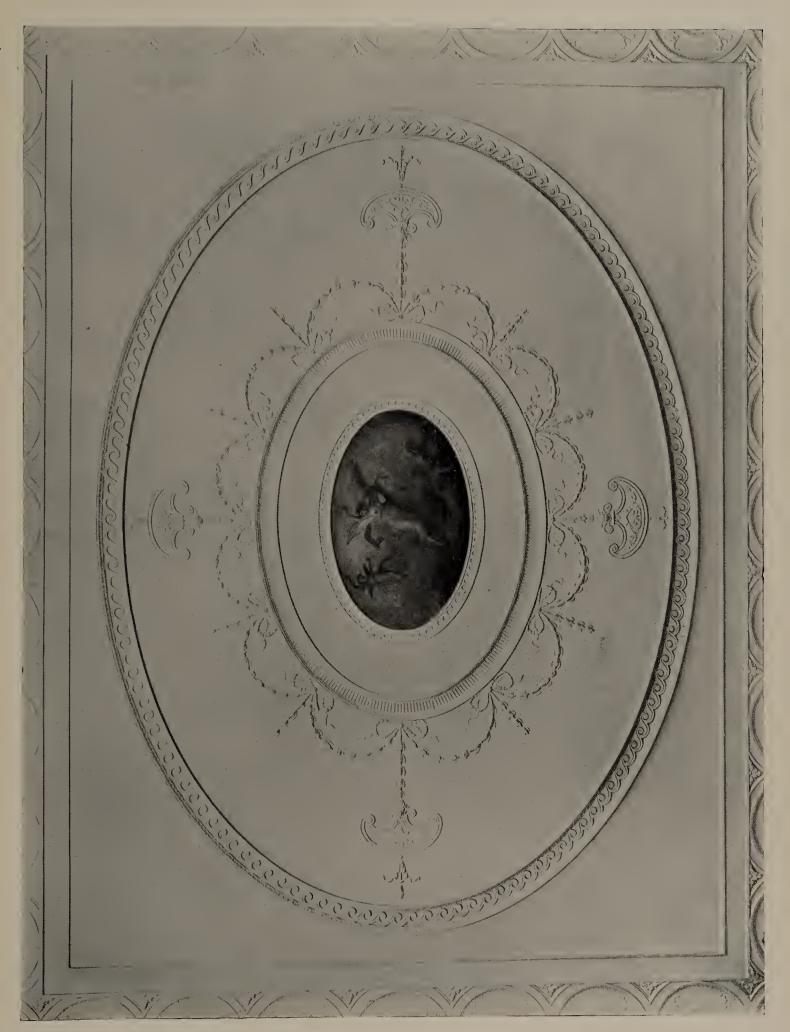






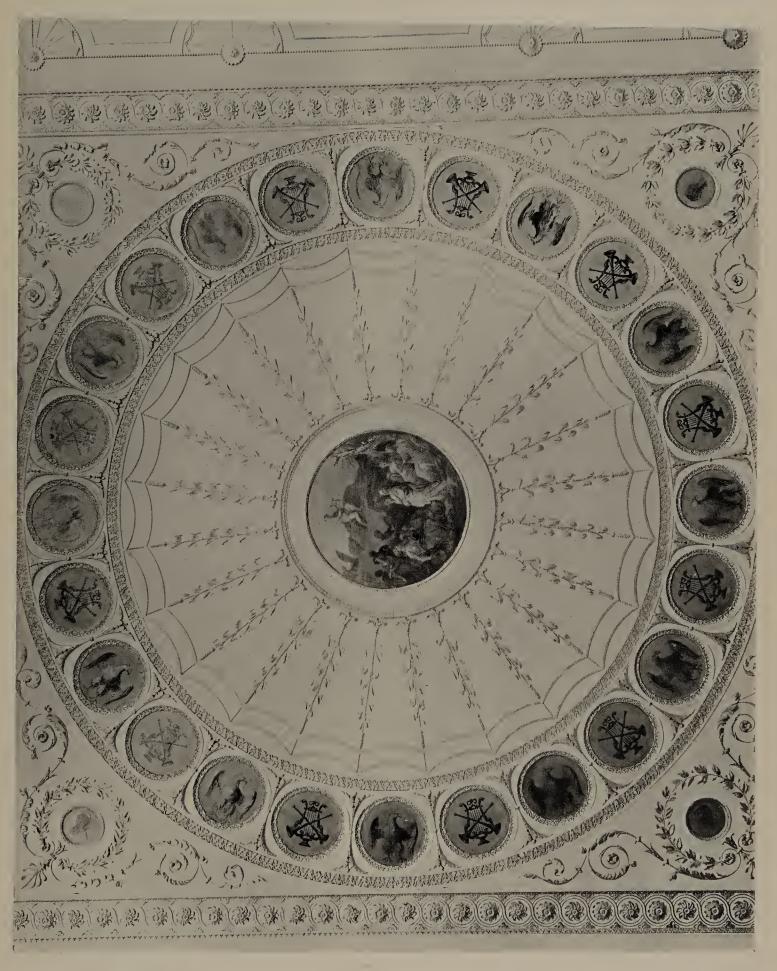
TWO LONDON CHIMNEYPIECES OF MARBLE.



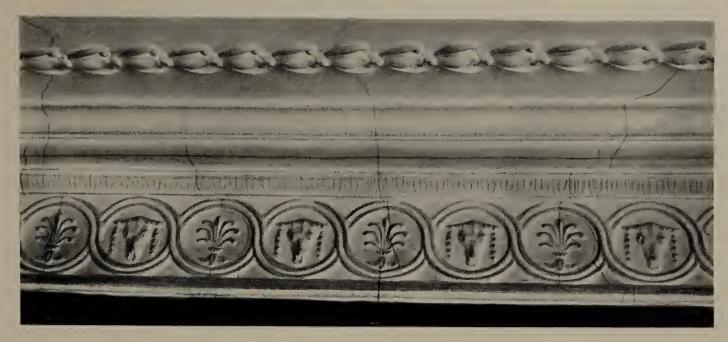


CEILING, 3 ADELPHI TERRACE, LONDON. ROBERT ADAM, ARCHITECT.







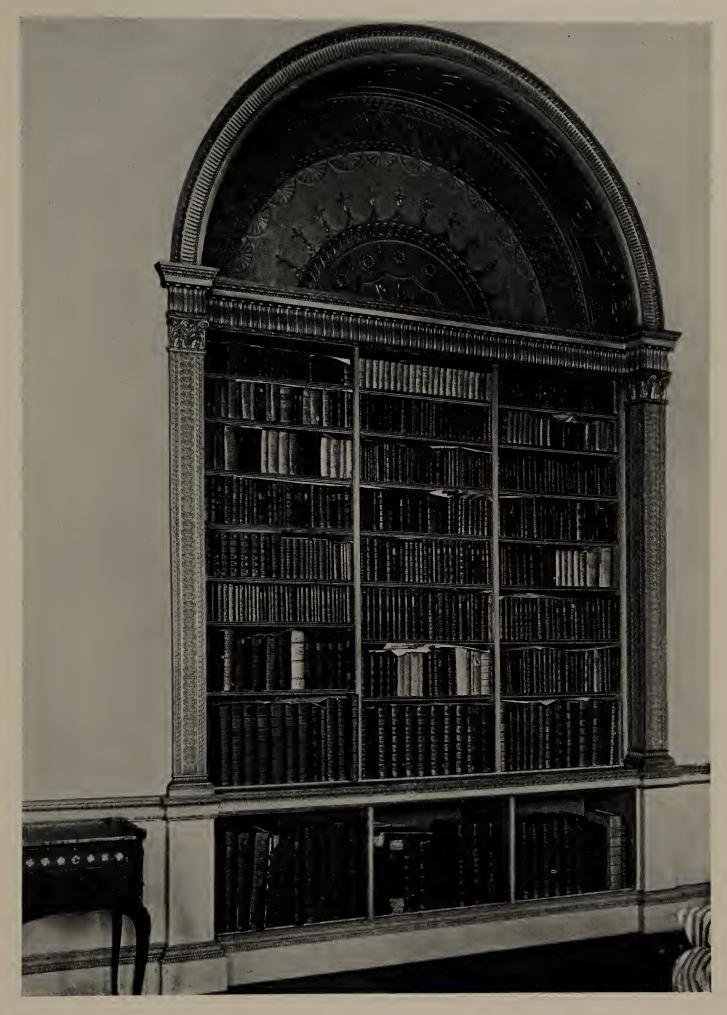






DETAILS OF FRIEZES AT 35 BEDFORD SQUARE.





DETAIL OF A LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BOOKCASE





L.C.C. Photograph.

CEILING FROM No. 65 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.



L.C.C. Photograph.

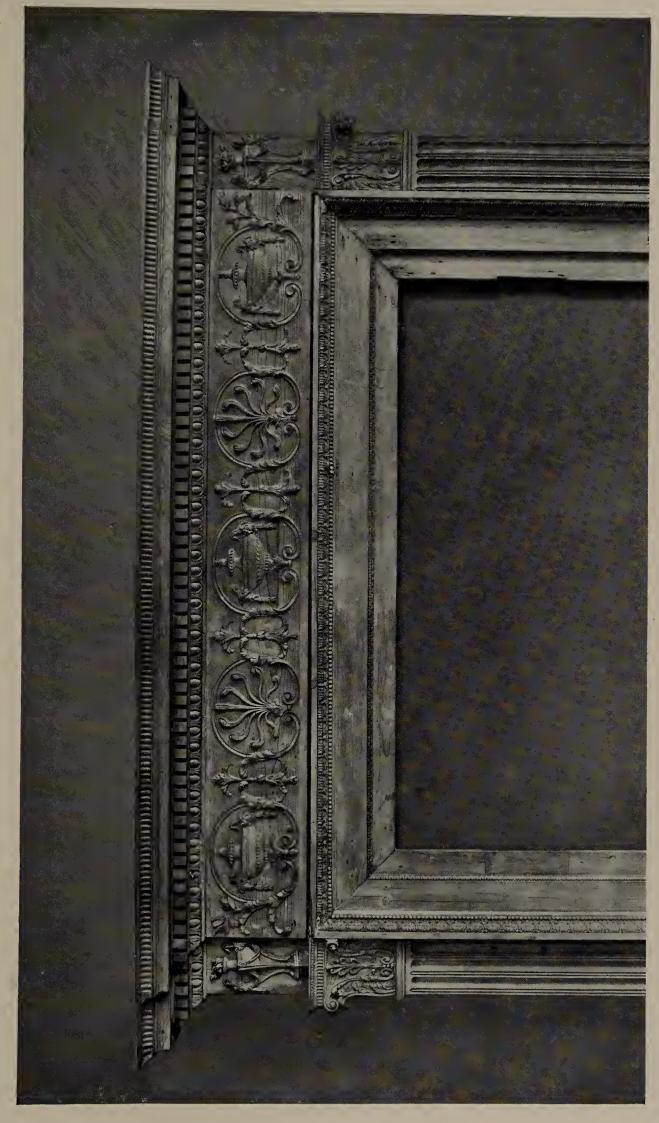
CEILING FROM No. 51 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.





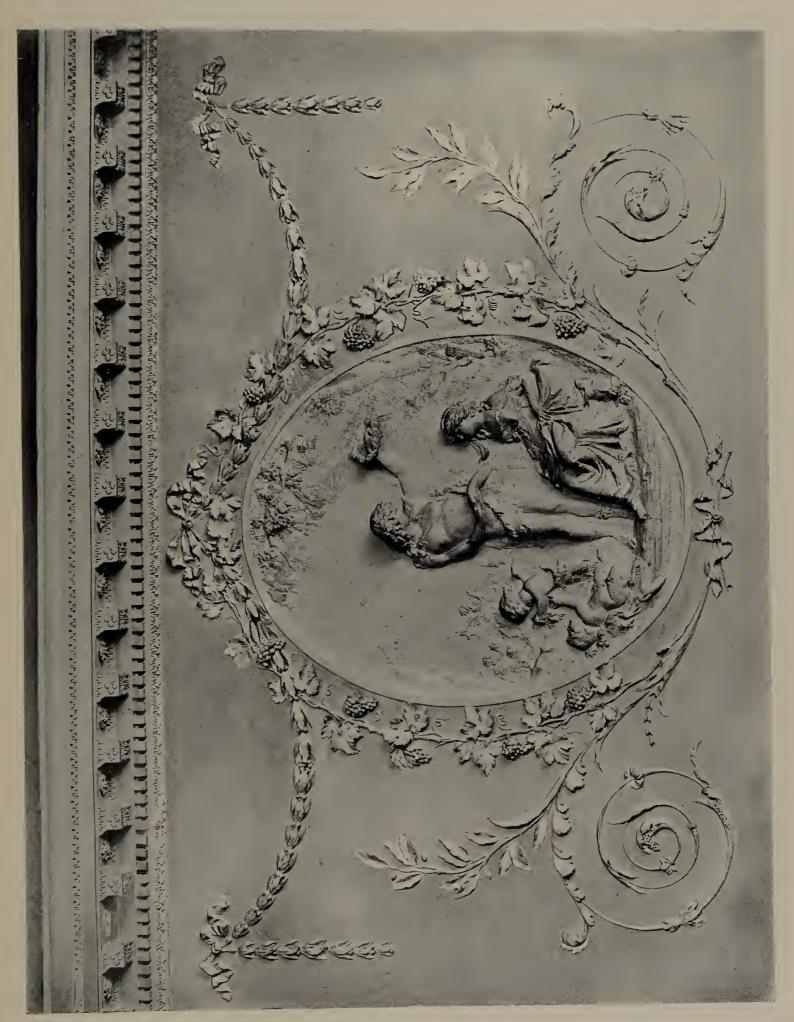
THE OVAL STAIRCASE HALL IN THE OLD WAR OFFICE, PALL MALL, LONDON (NOW DEMOLISHED). SIR JOHN SOANE, ARCHITECT.





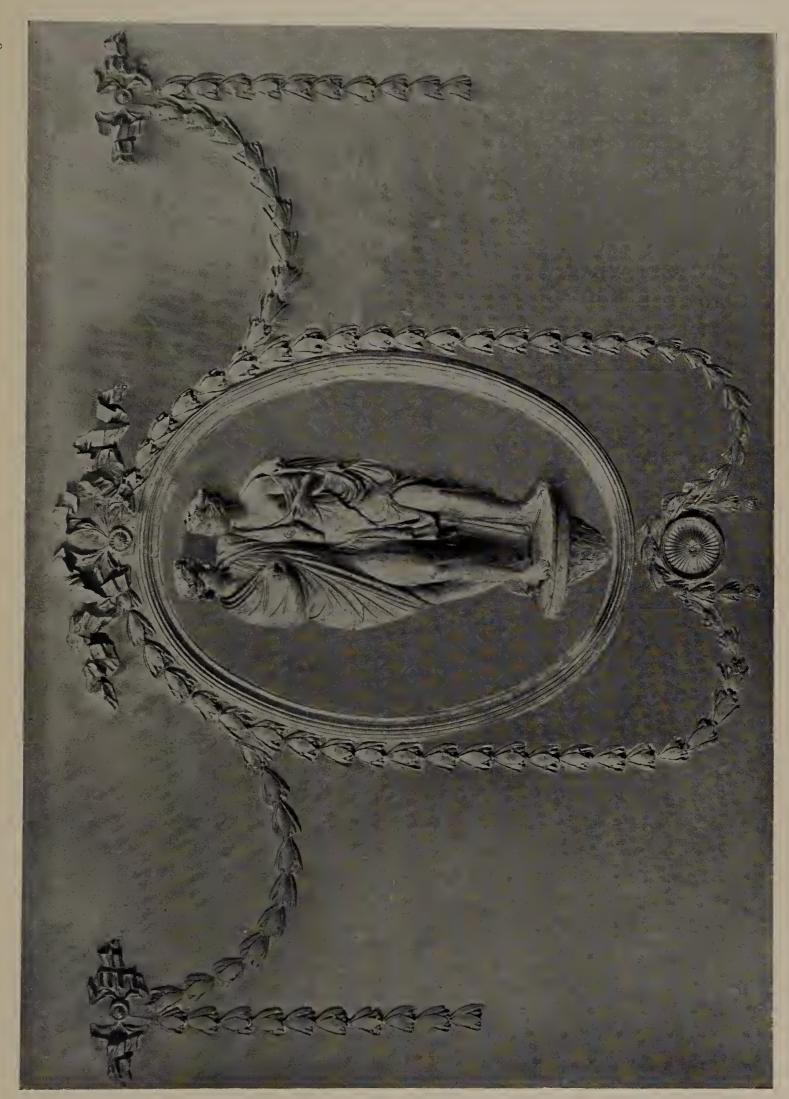
DOORCASE FROM No. 29 GREAT GEORGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, NOW IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON.





PLASTER OVERMANTEL FROM No. 25 PARLIAMENT STREET, WESTMINSTER, NOW IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM.





PLASTER MEDALLION FROM No. 29 GREAT GEORGE STREET, WESTMINSTER.





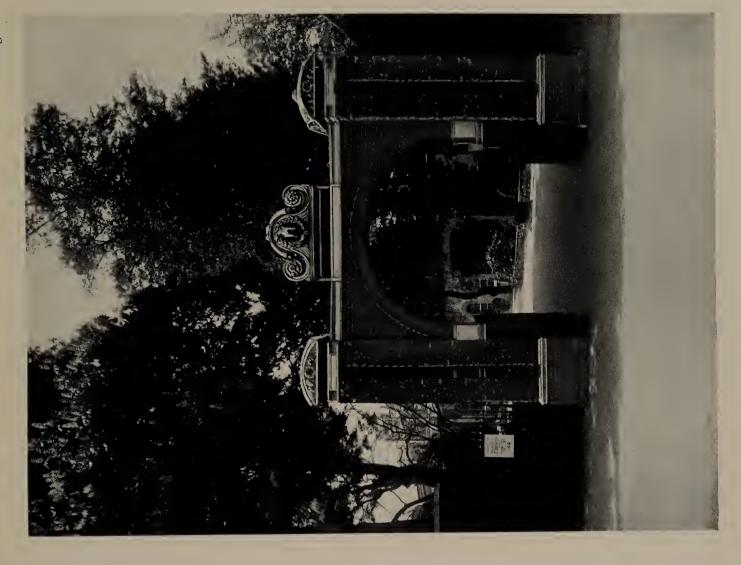
London Survey Committee.

Photograph by H. W. Fincham.

CATHERINE LODGE, TRAFALGAR SQUARE, CHELSEA.
VIEW OF STAIRCASE.







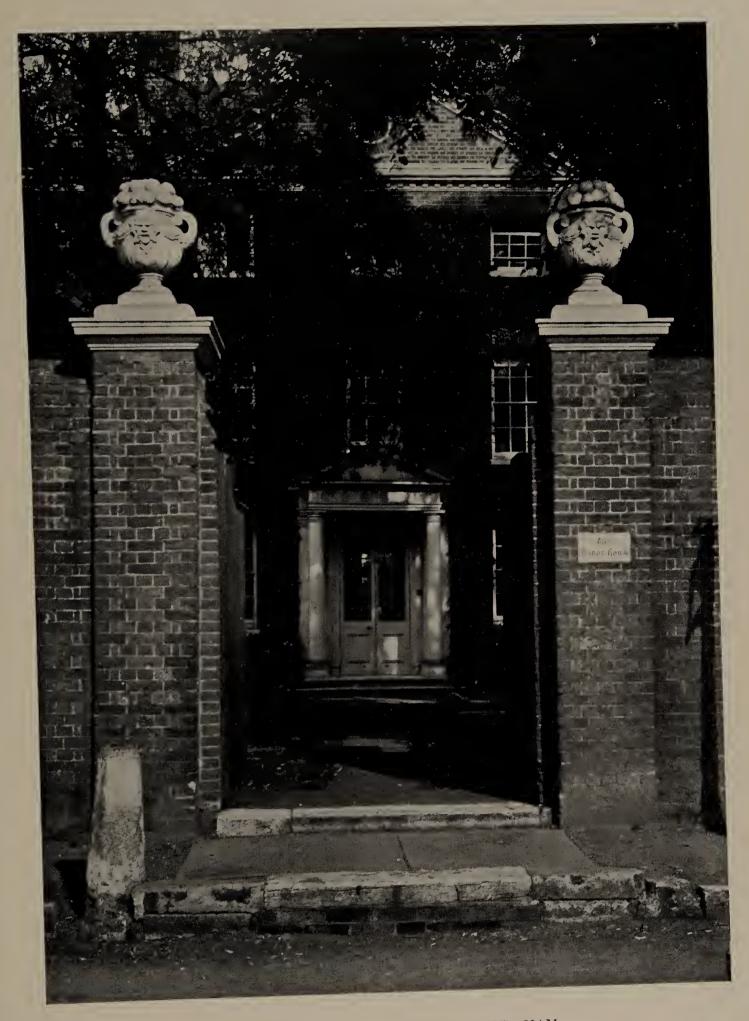






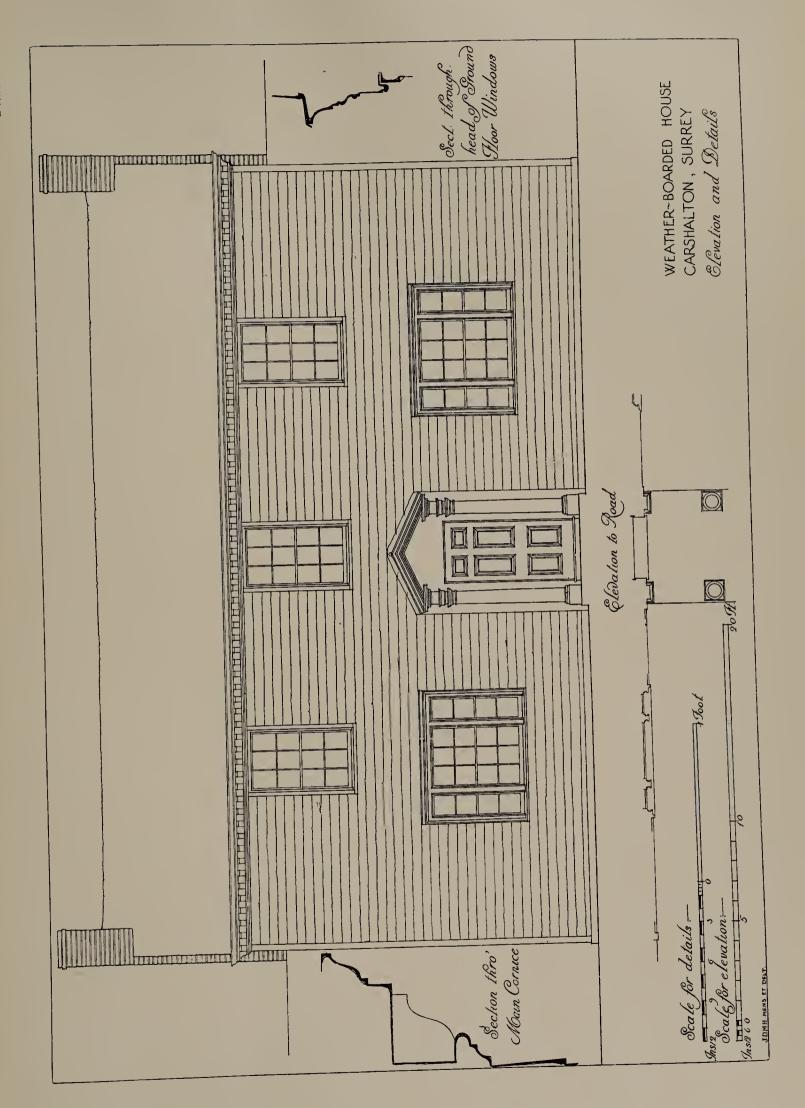
GARDEN DETAILS AT PITZHANGER HOUSE, EALING.



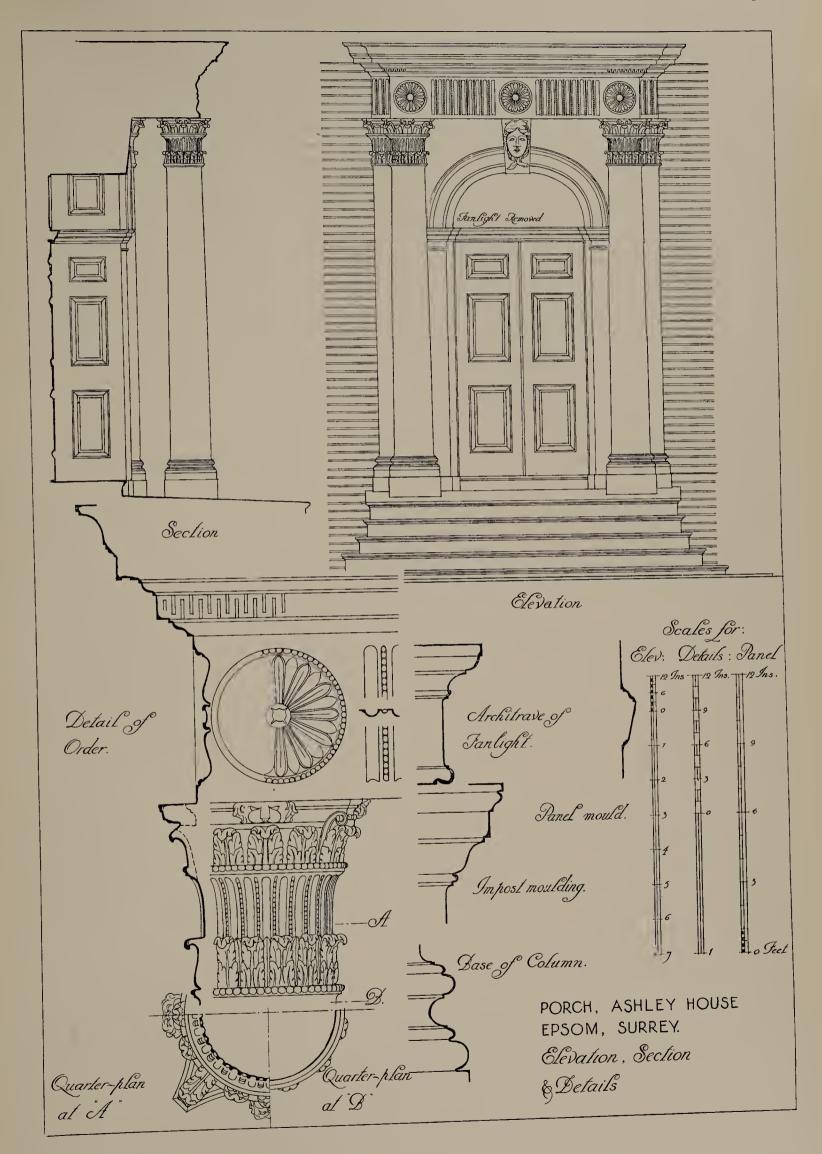


ENTRANCE TO THE MANOR HOUSE, HAM.

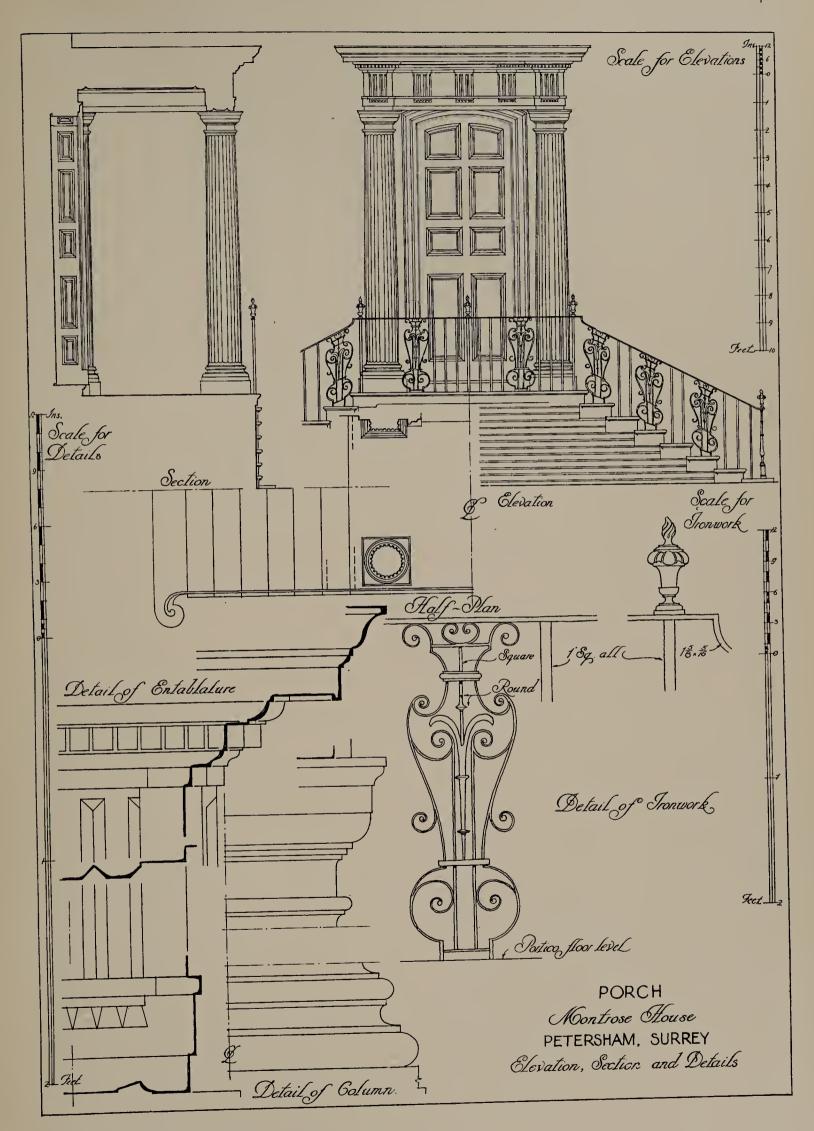




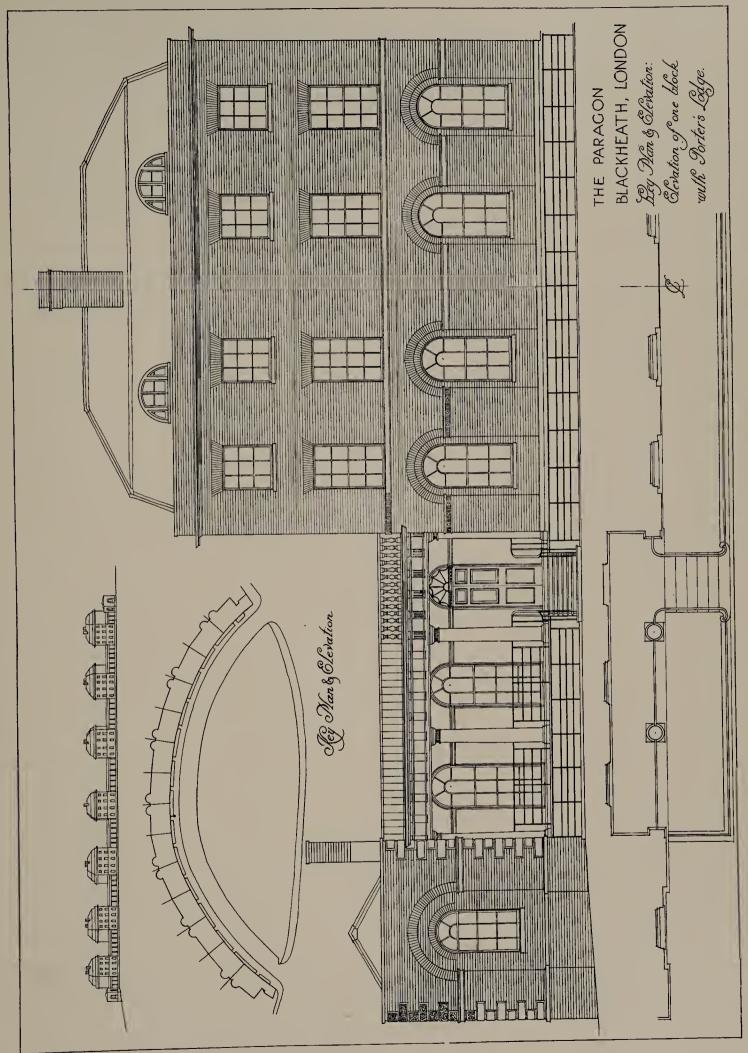




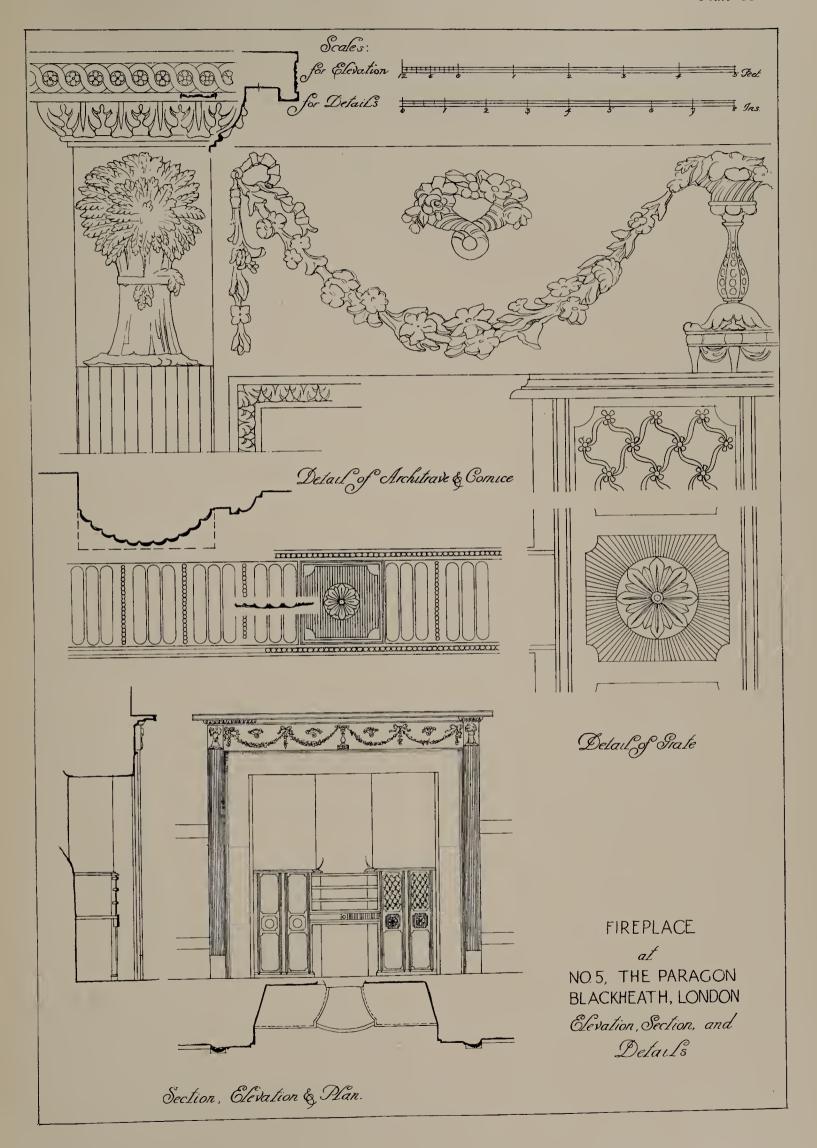




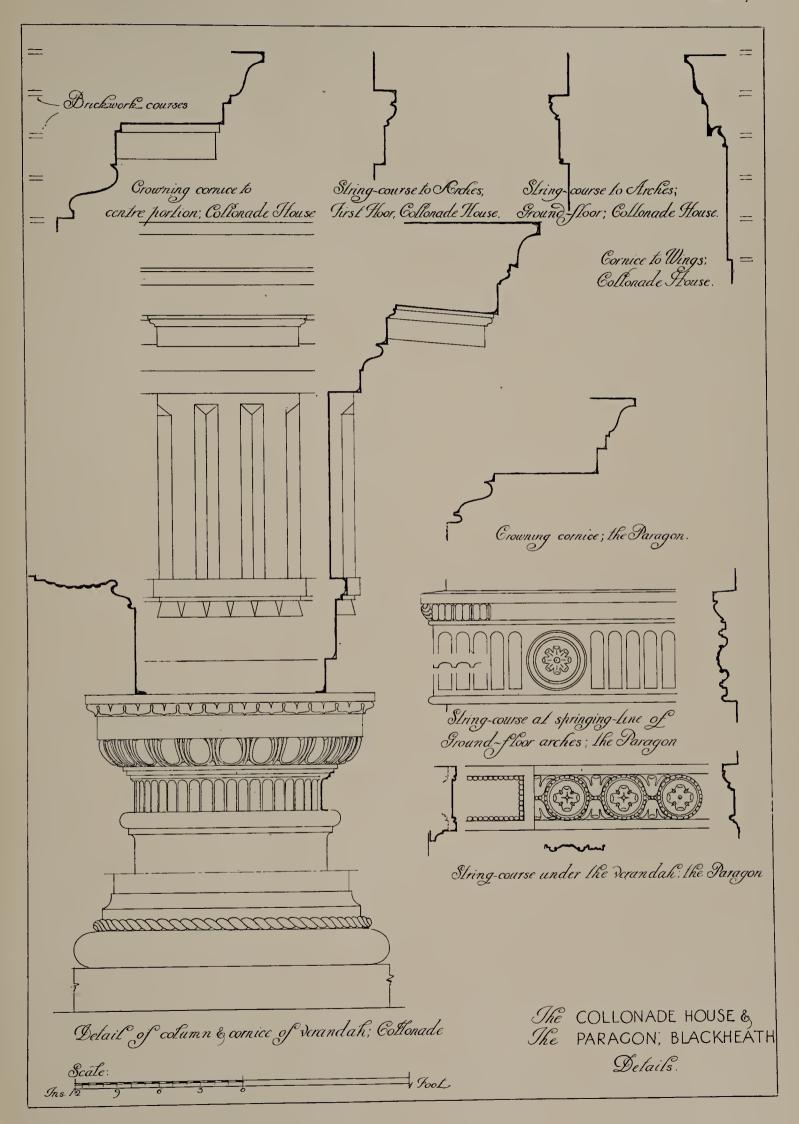




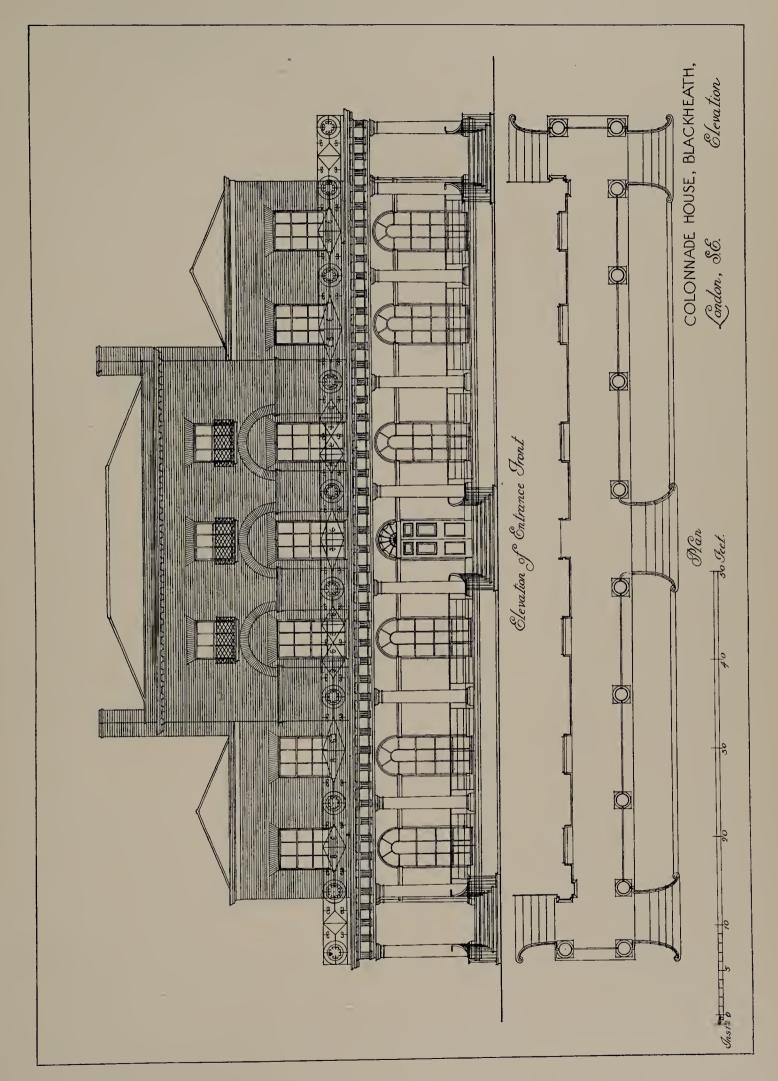




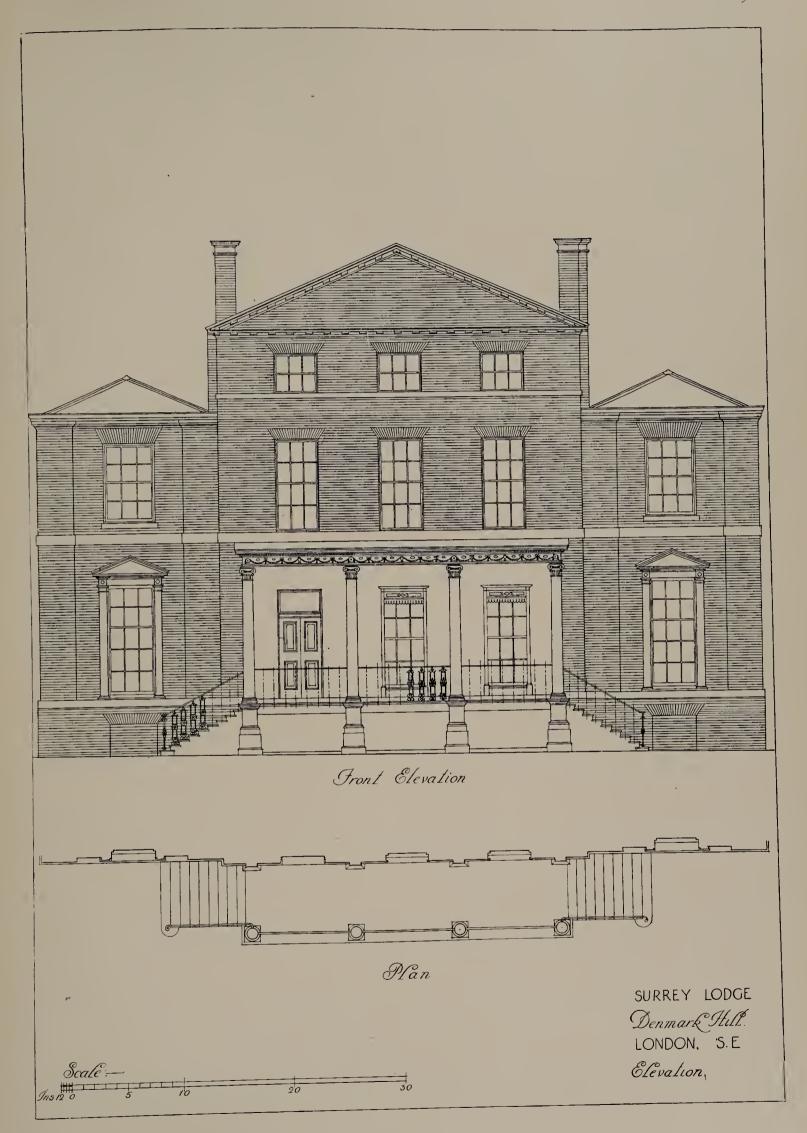




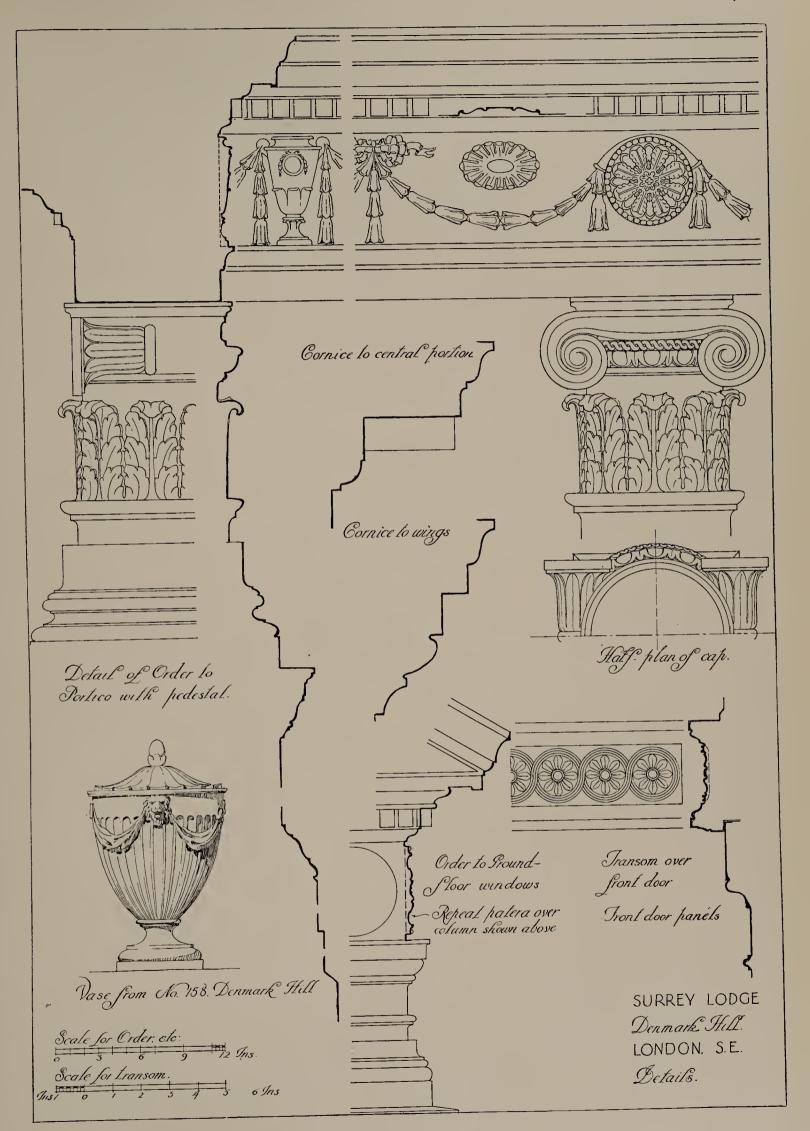




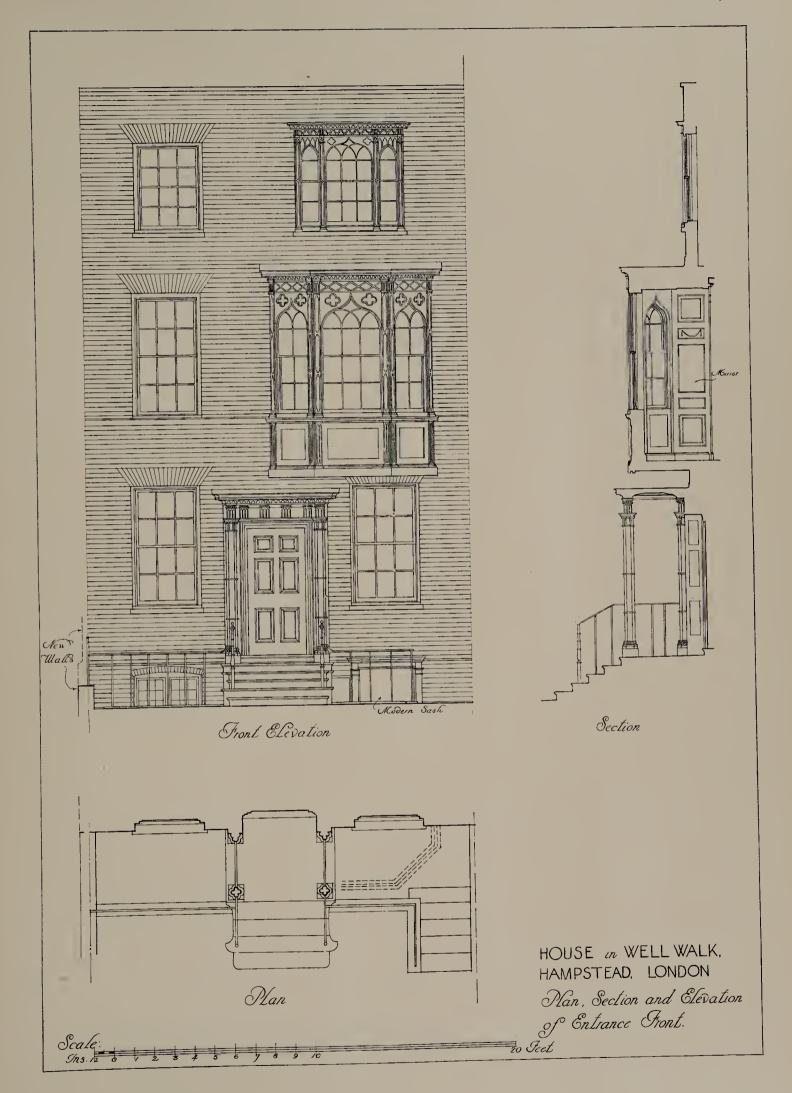




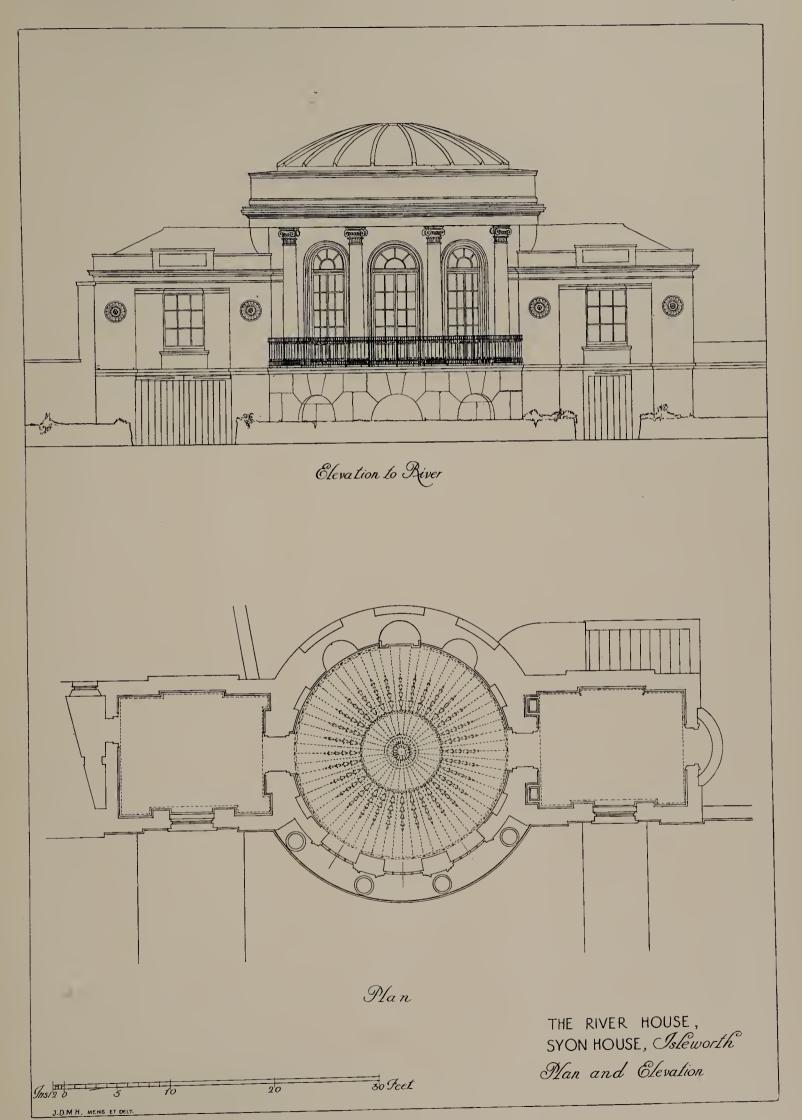




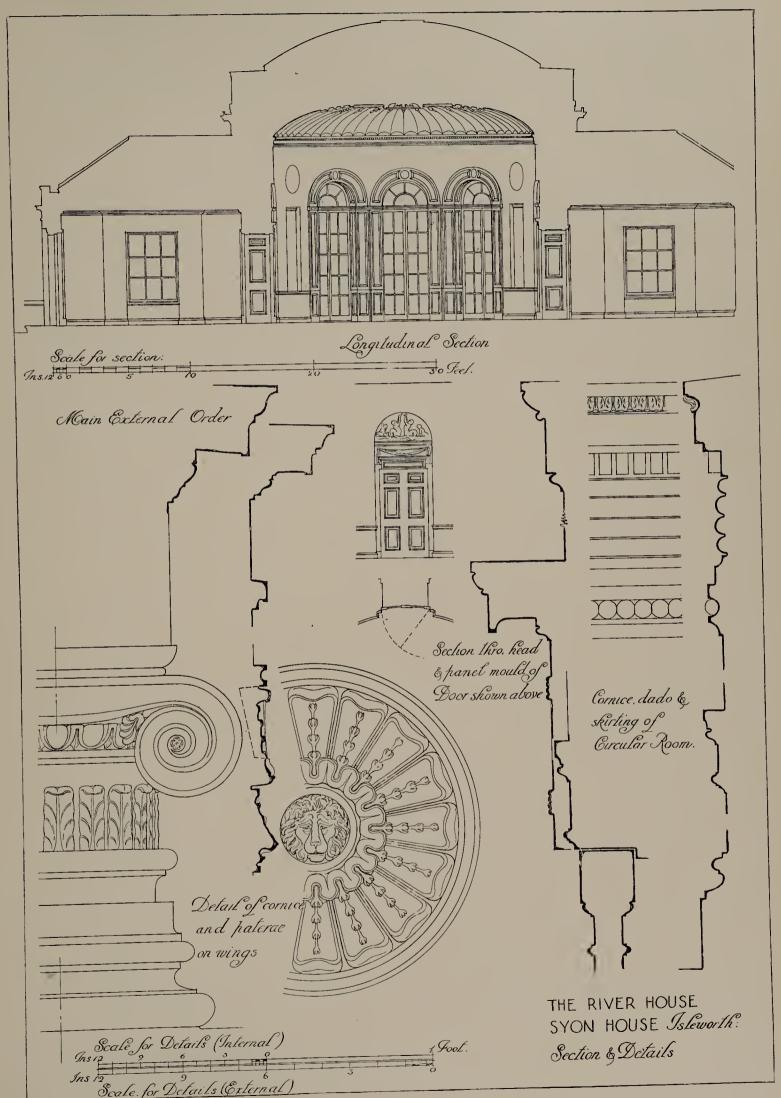




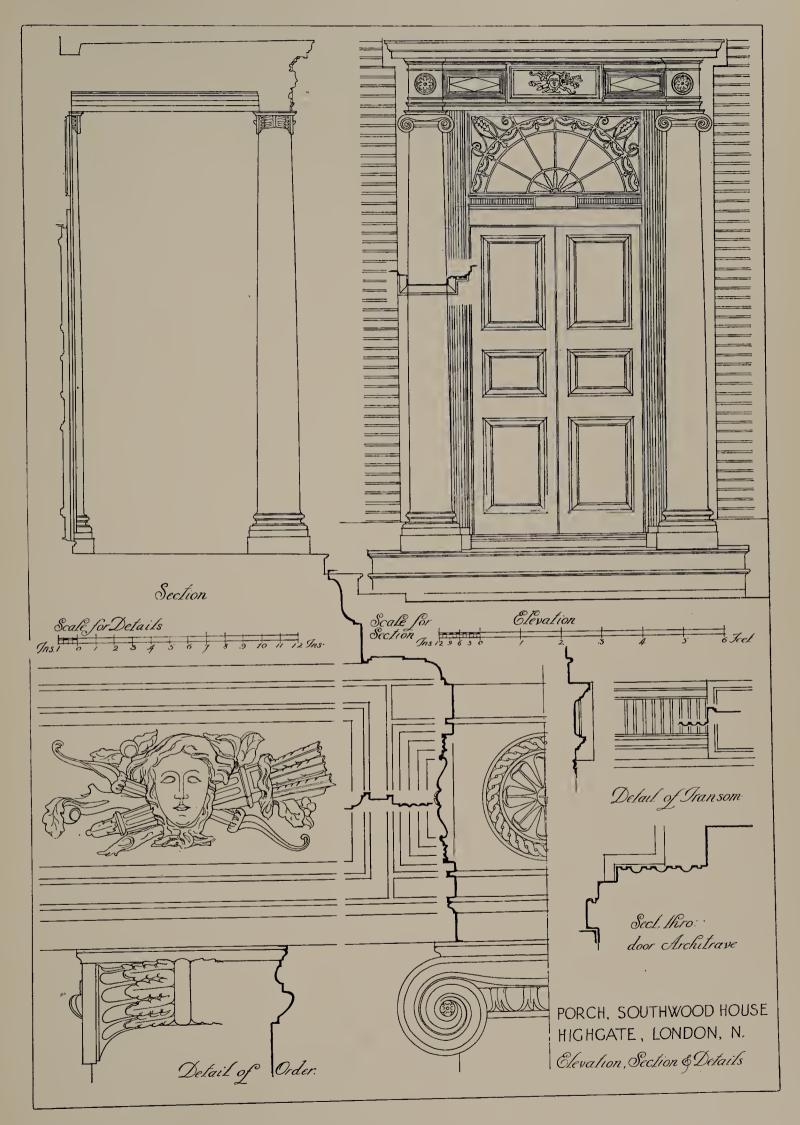




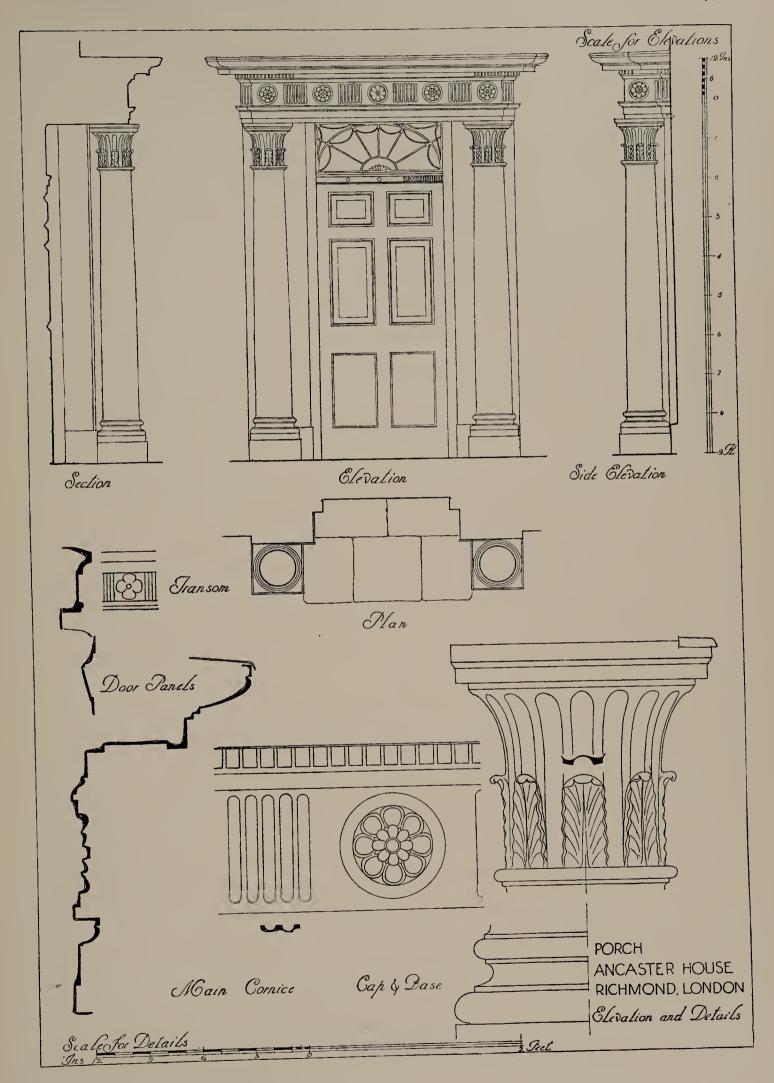




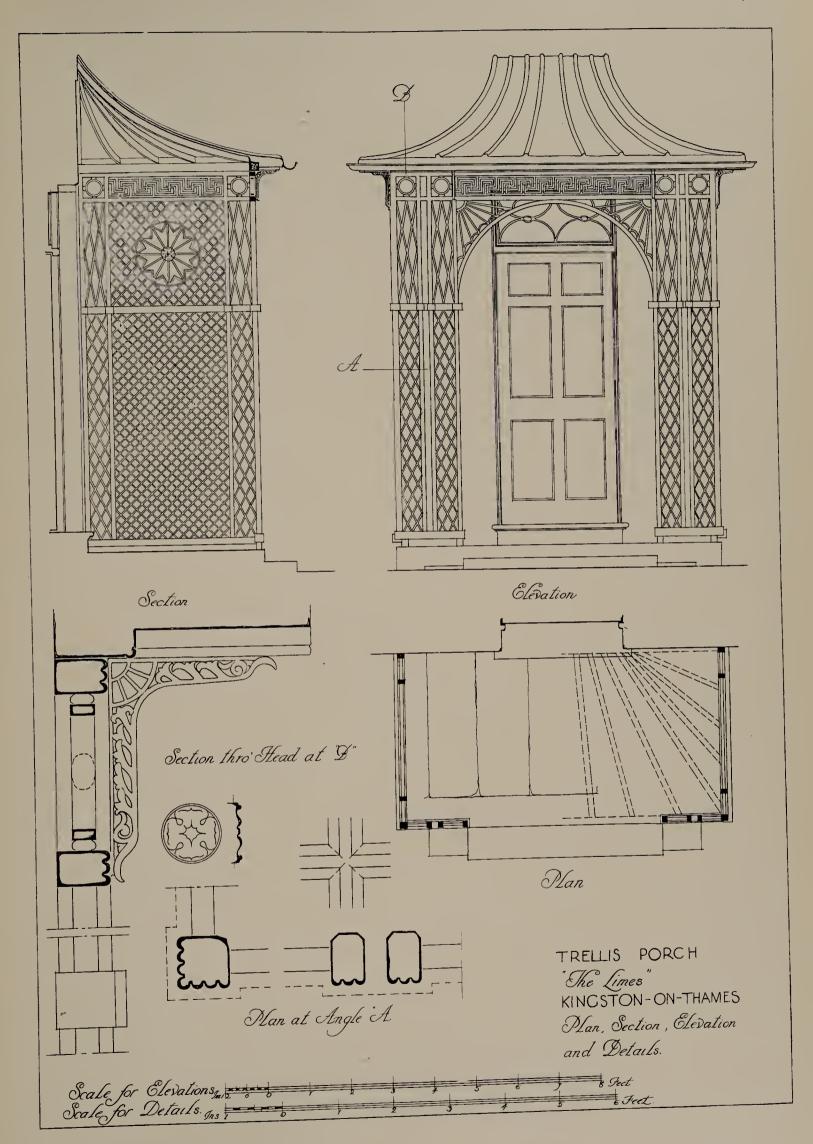




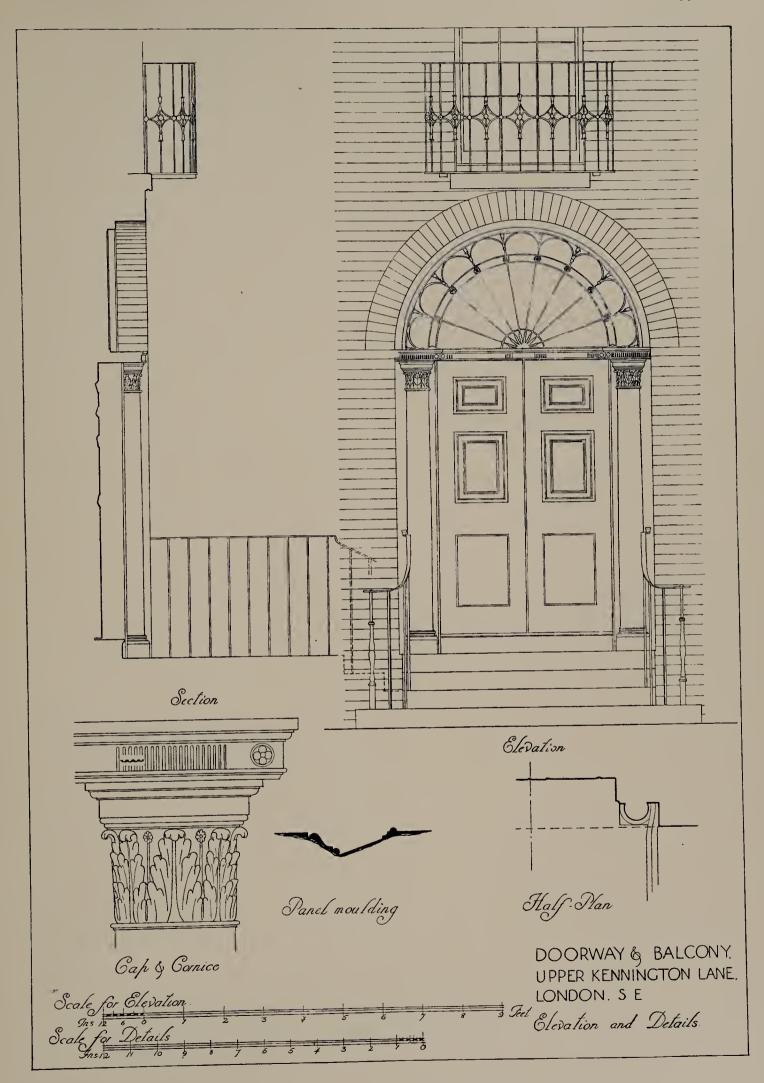




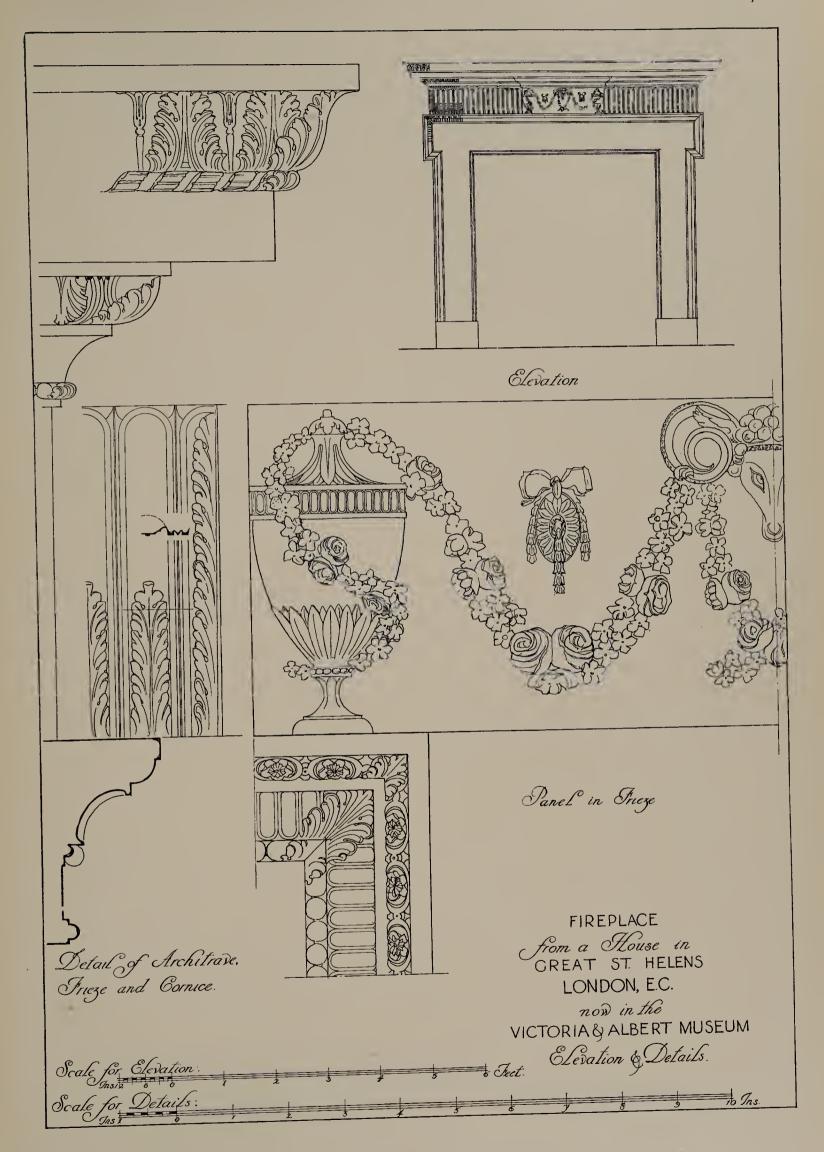




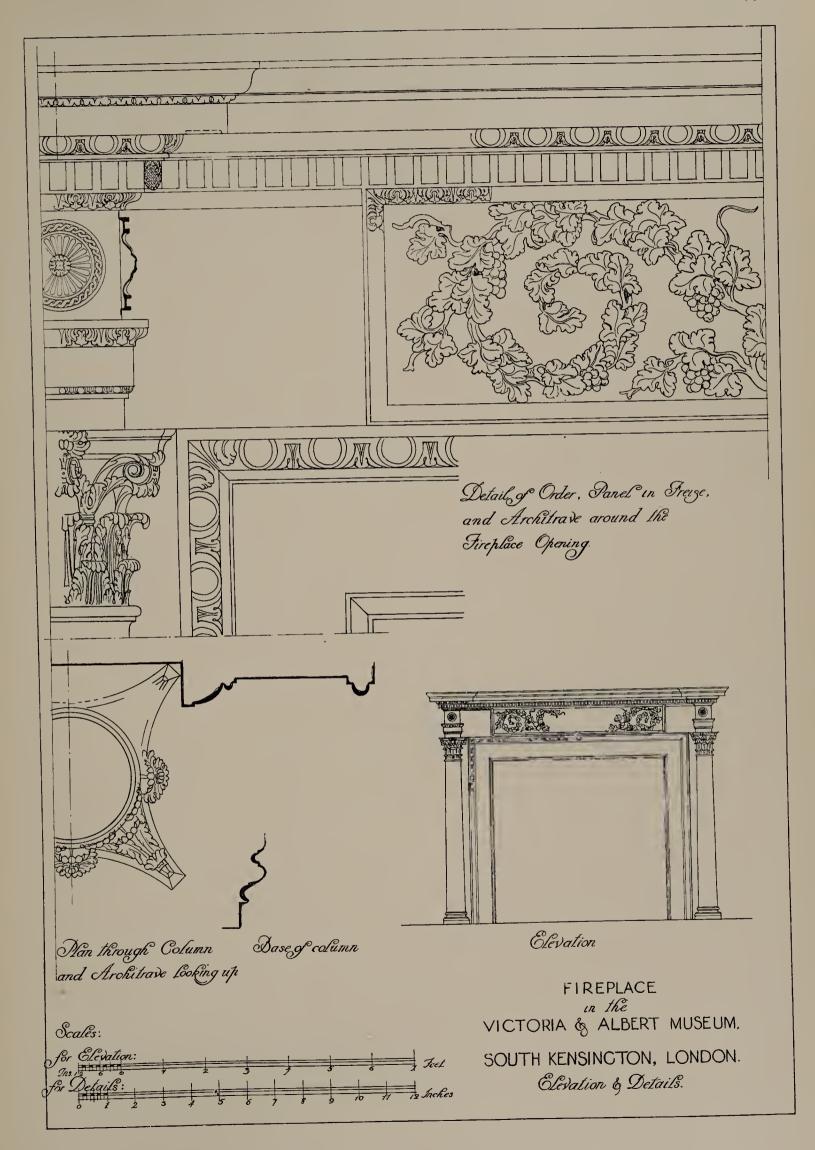




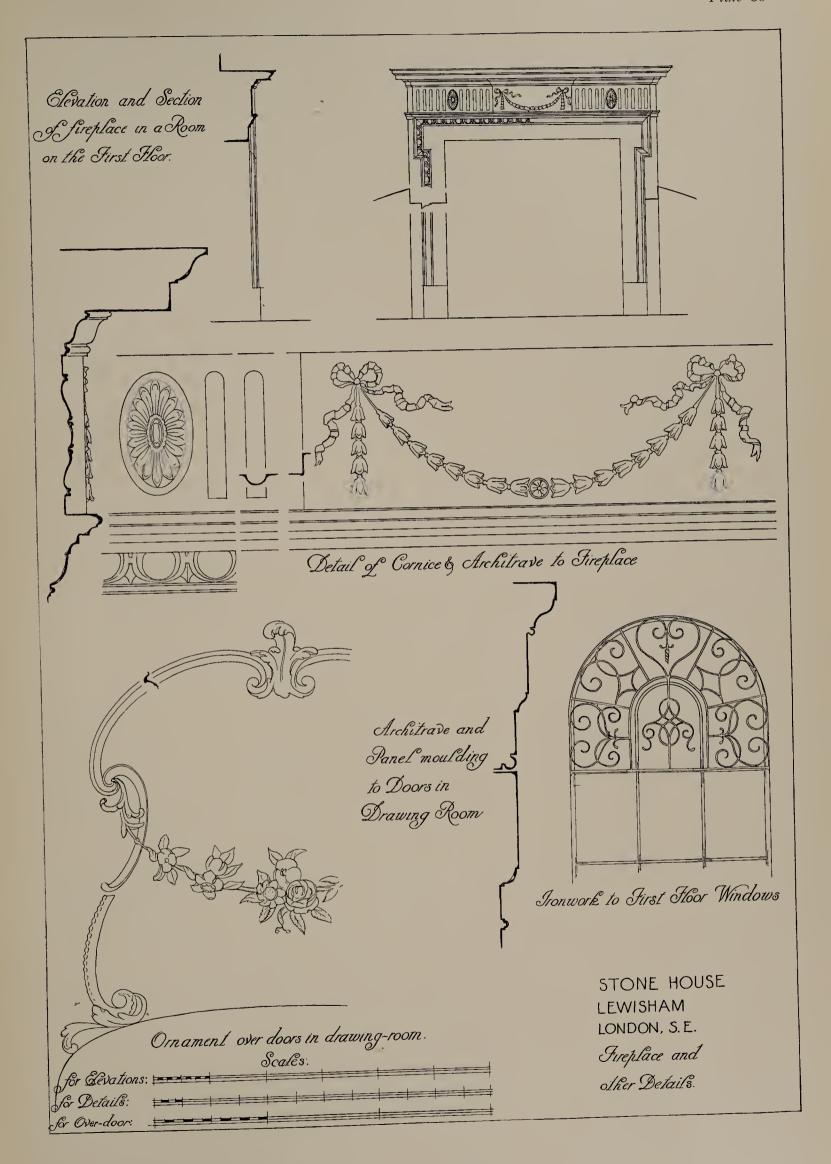




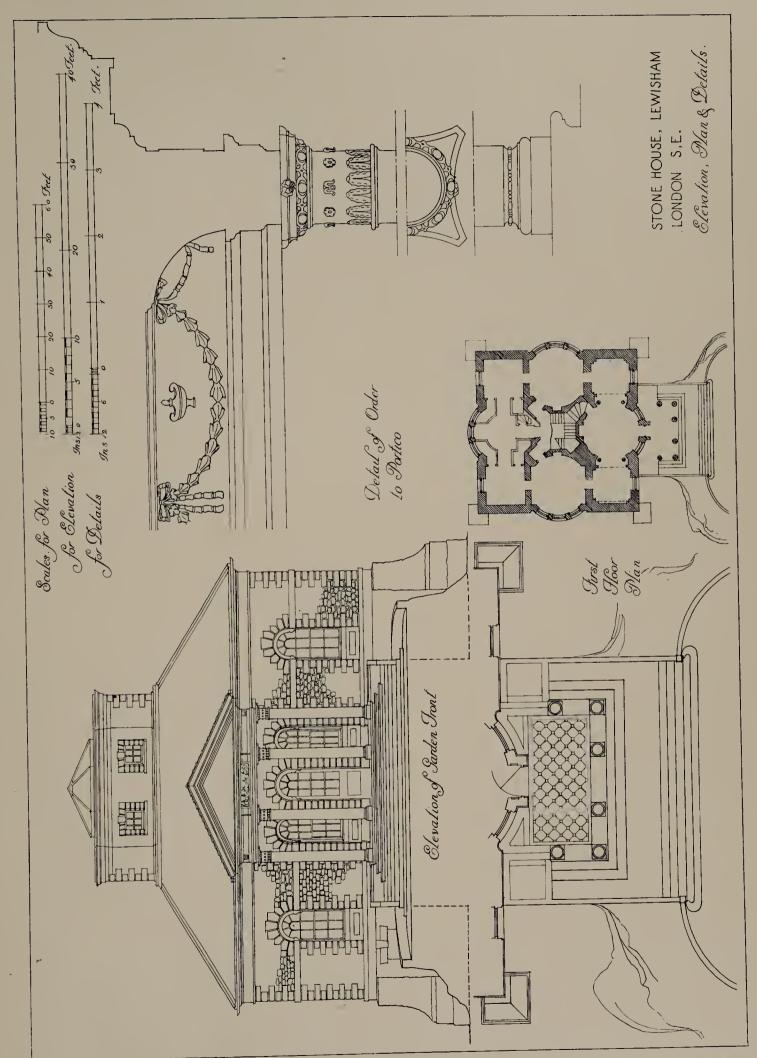




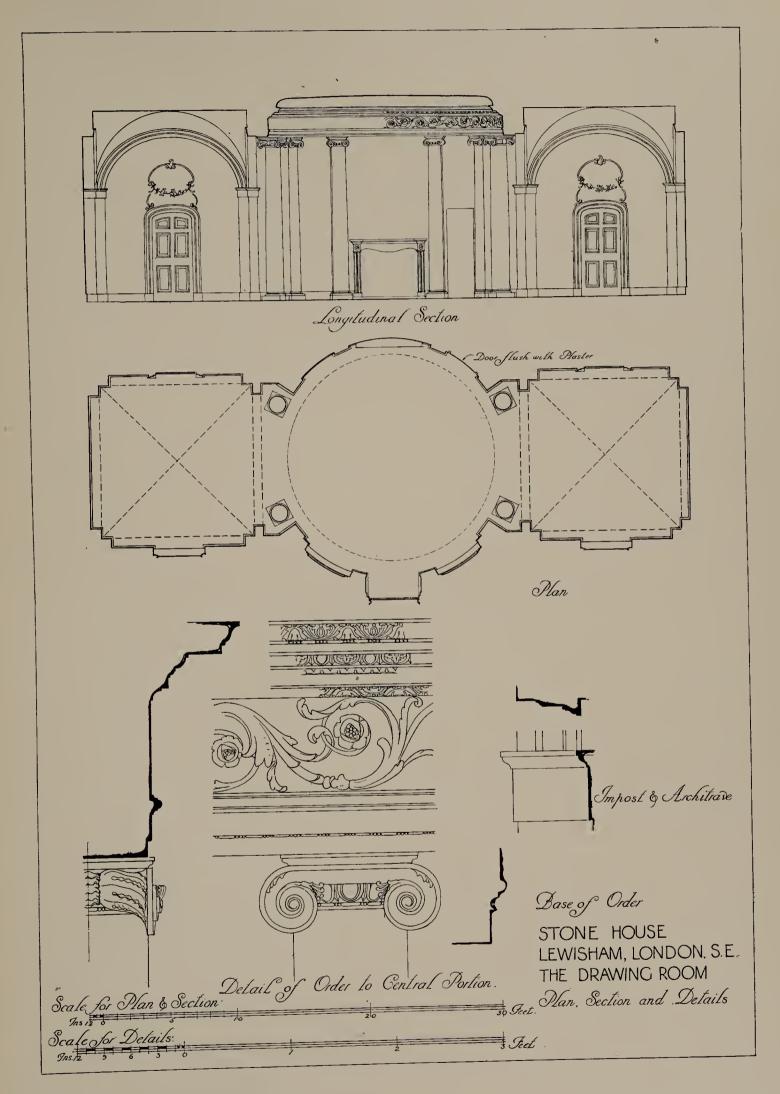




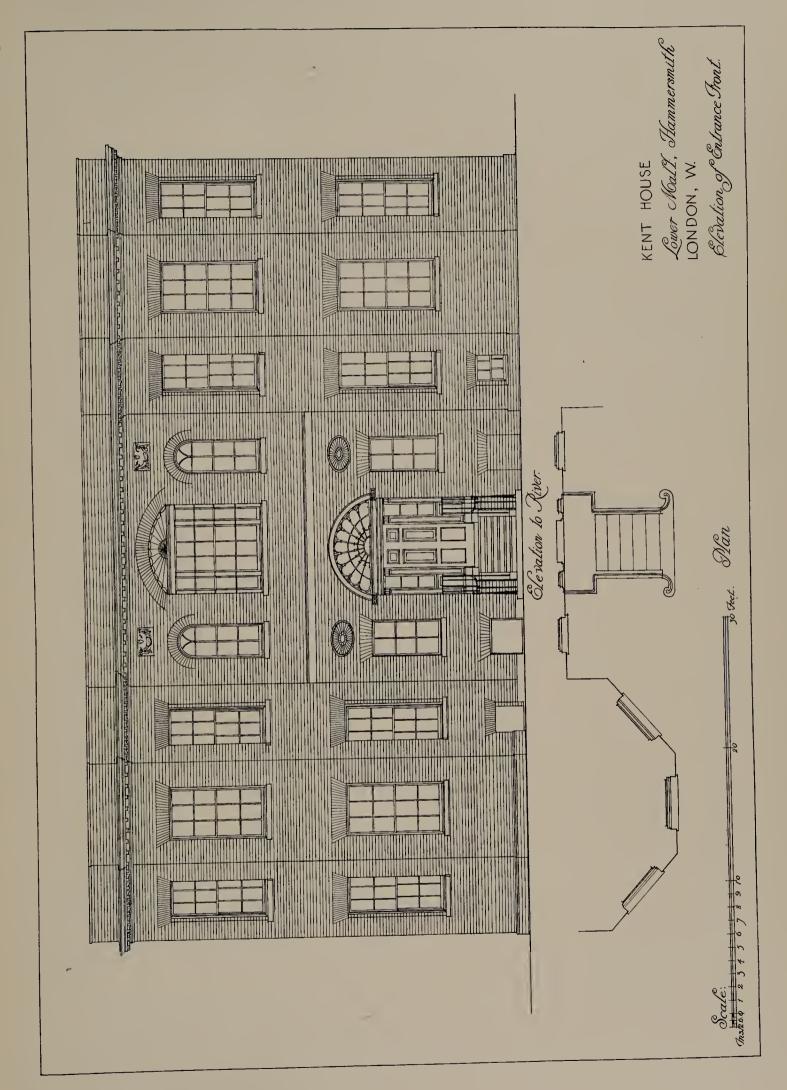




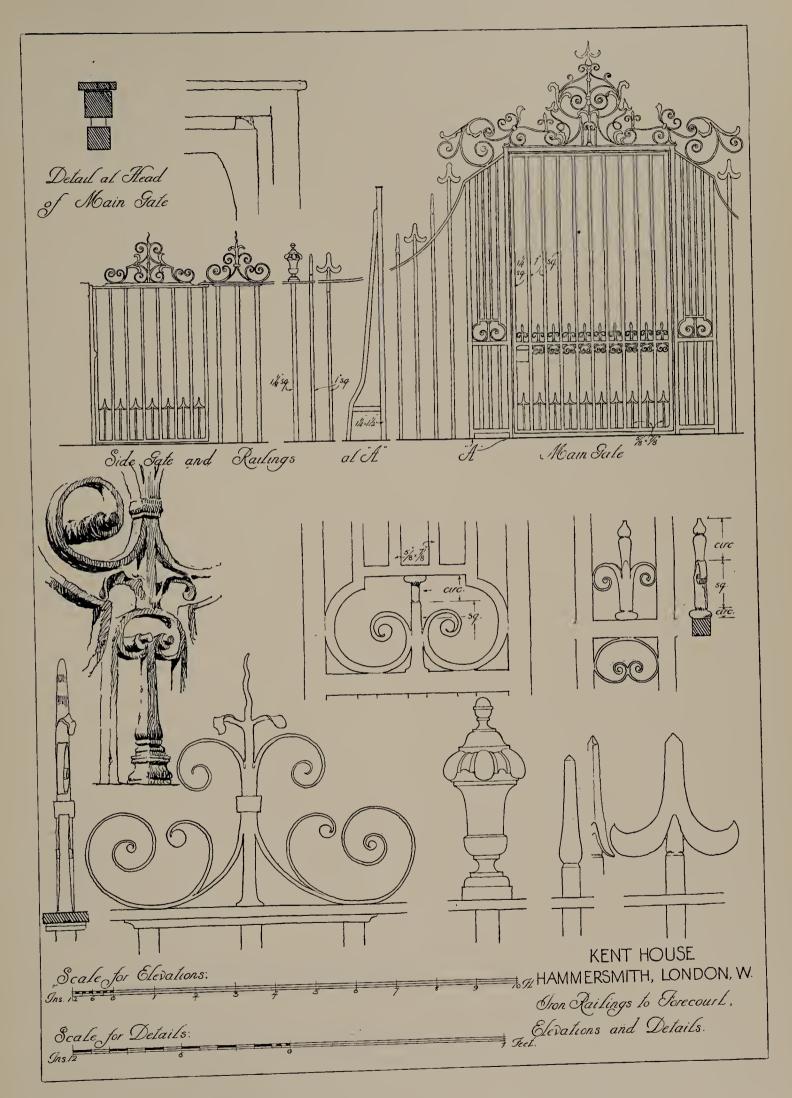




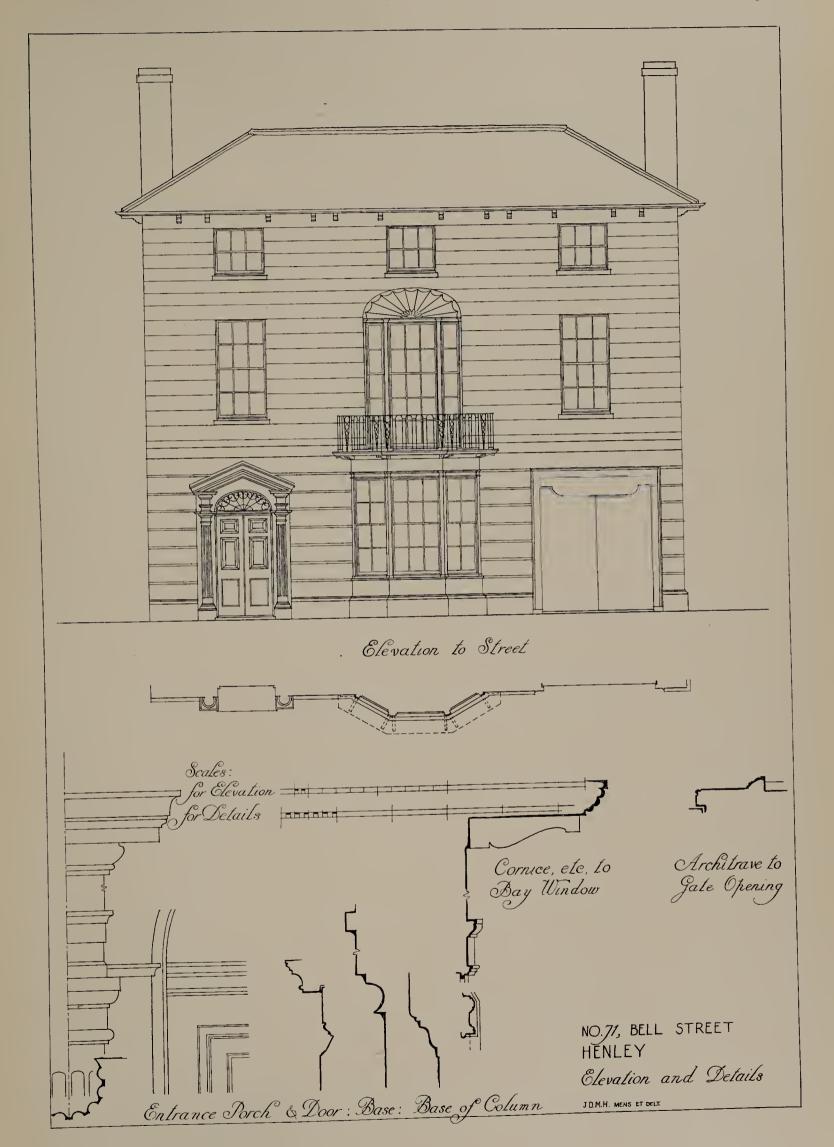




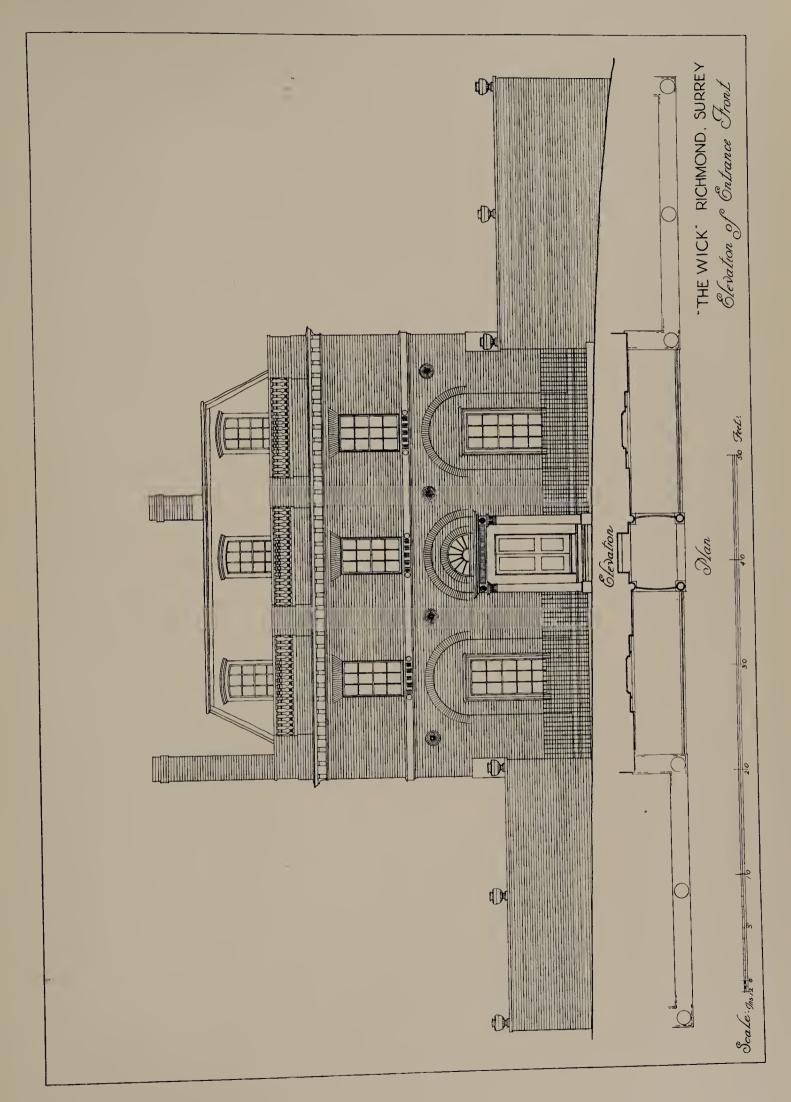




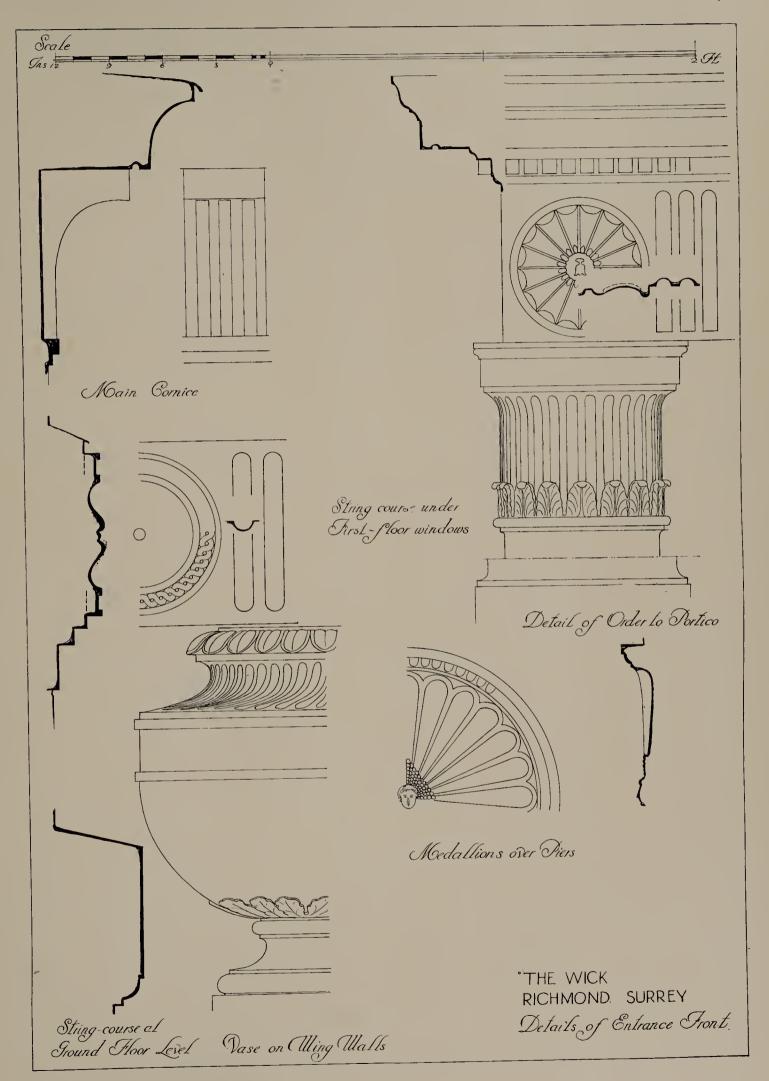




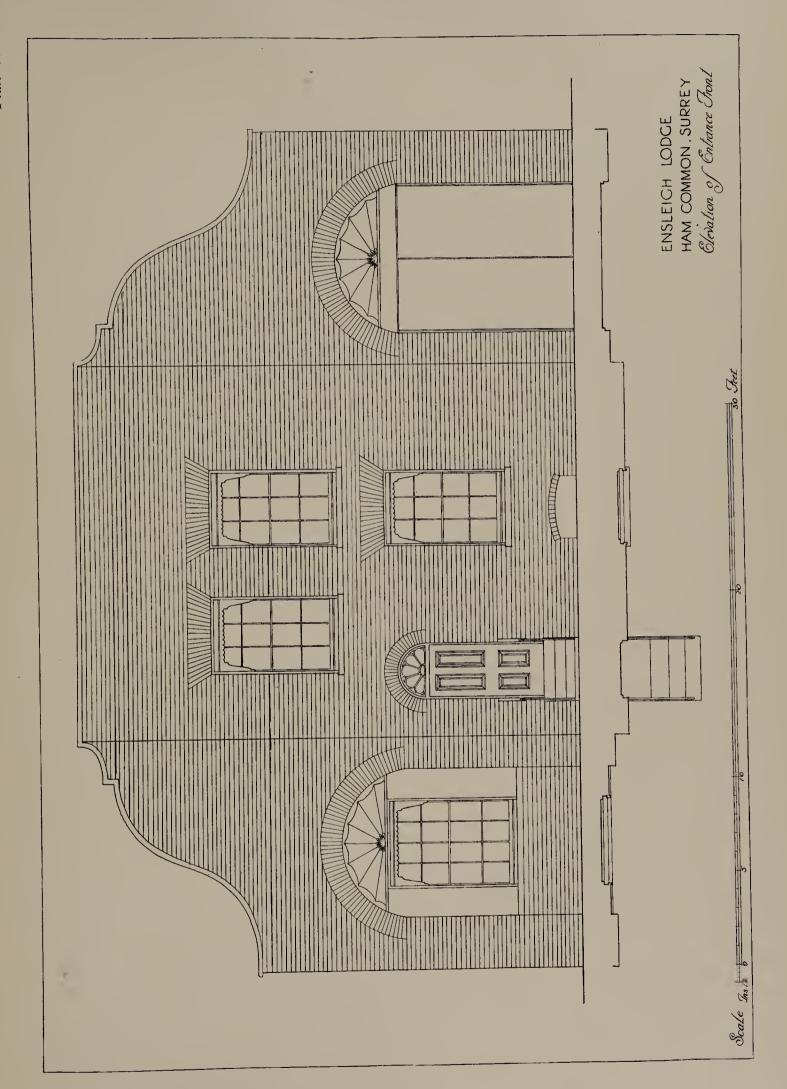




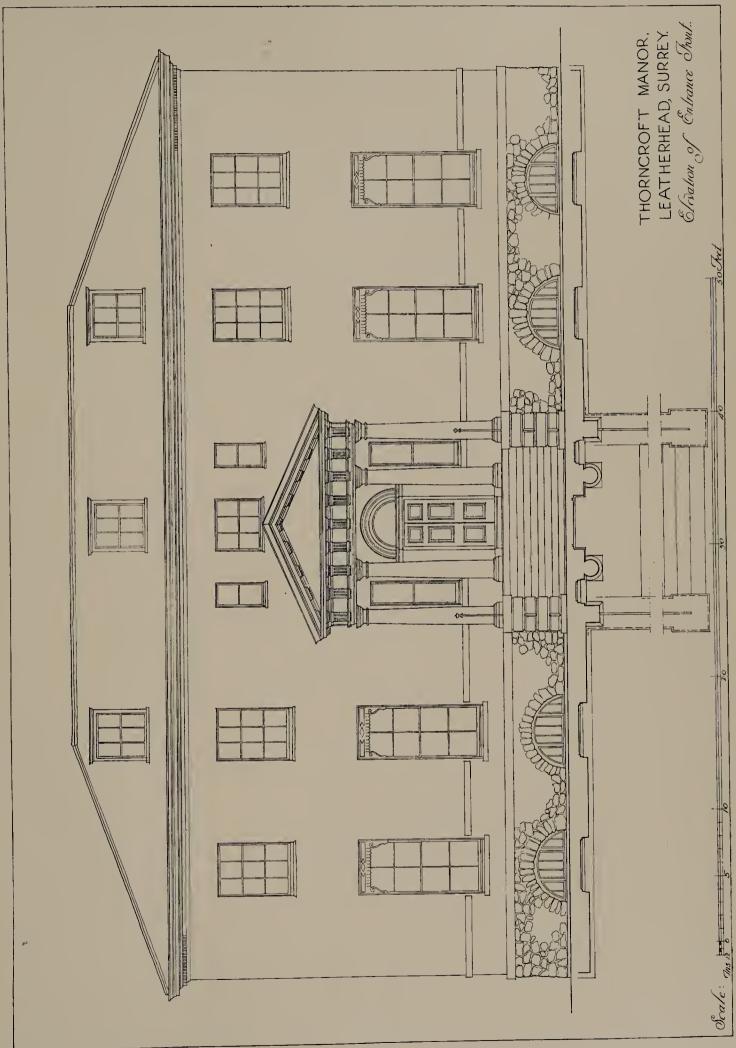




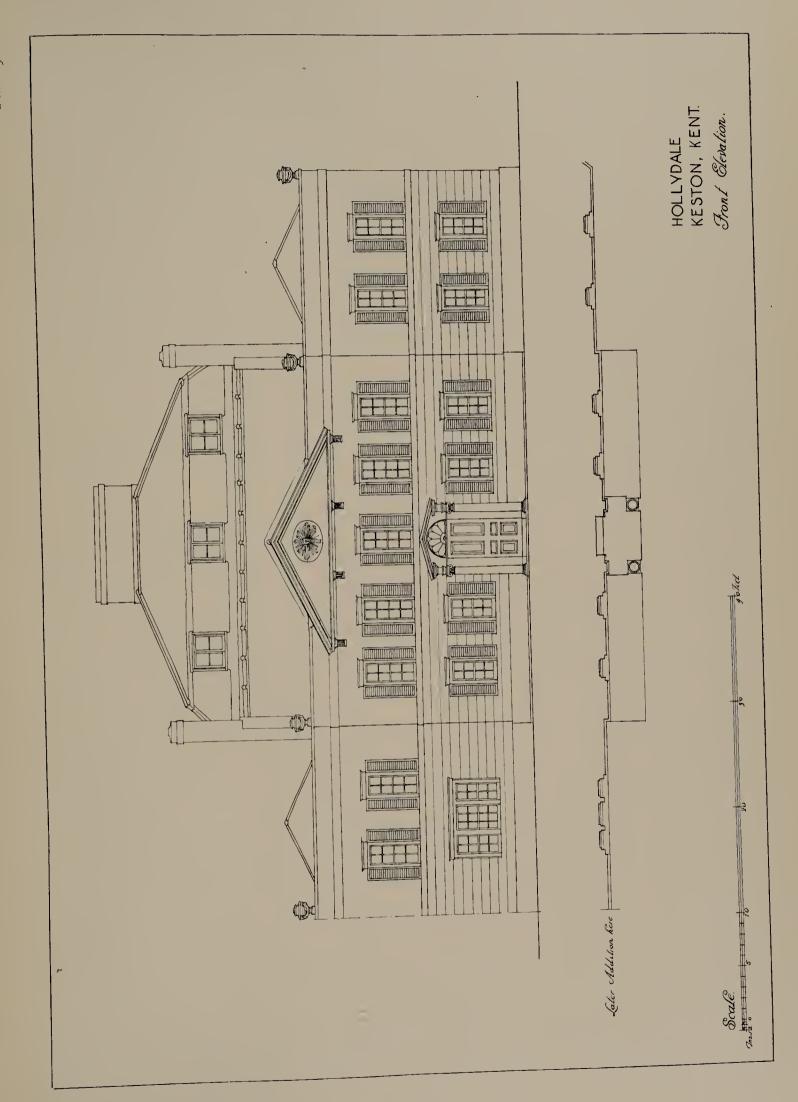




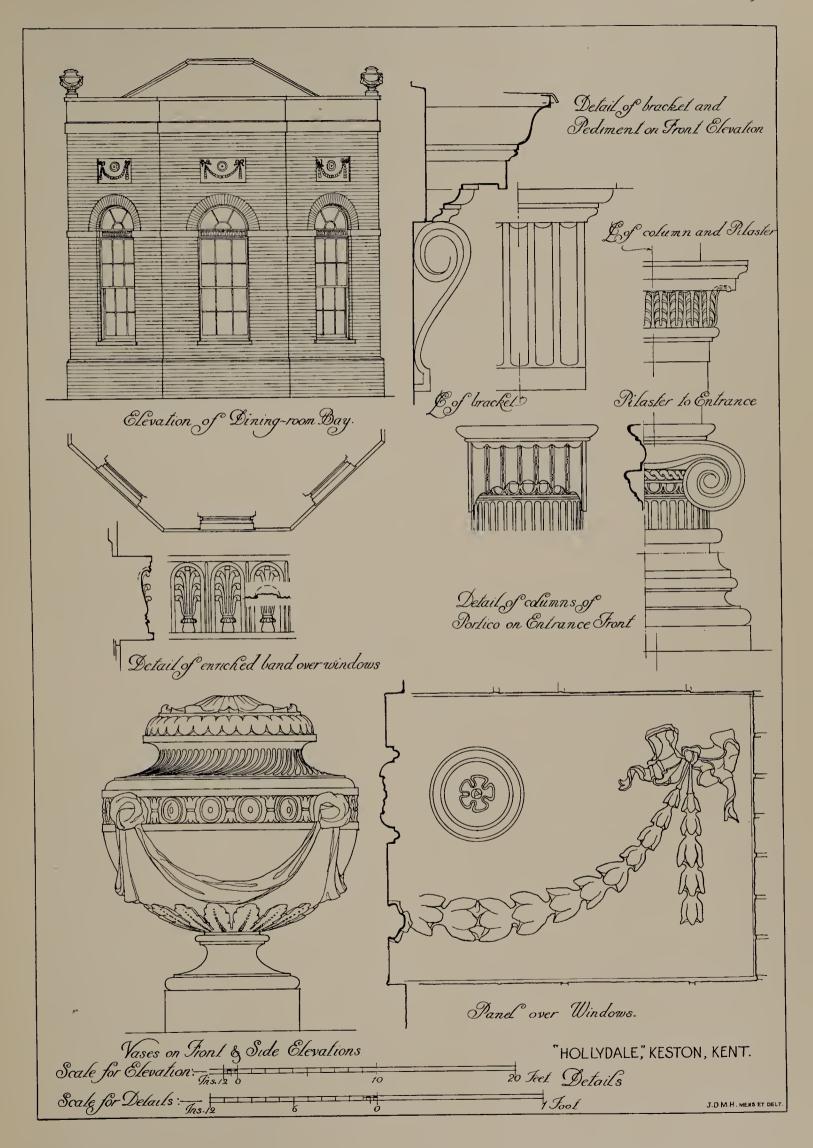




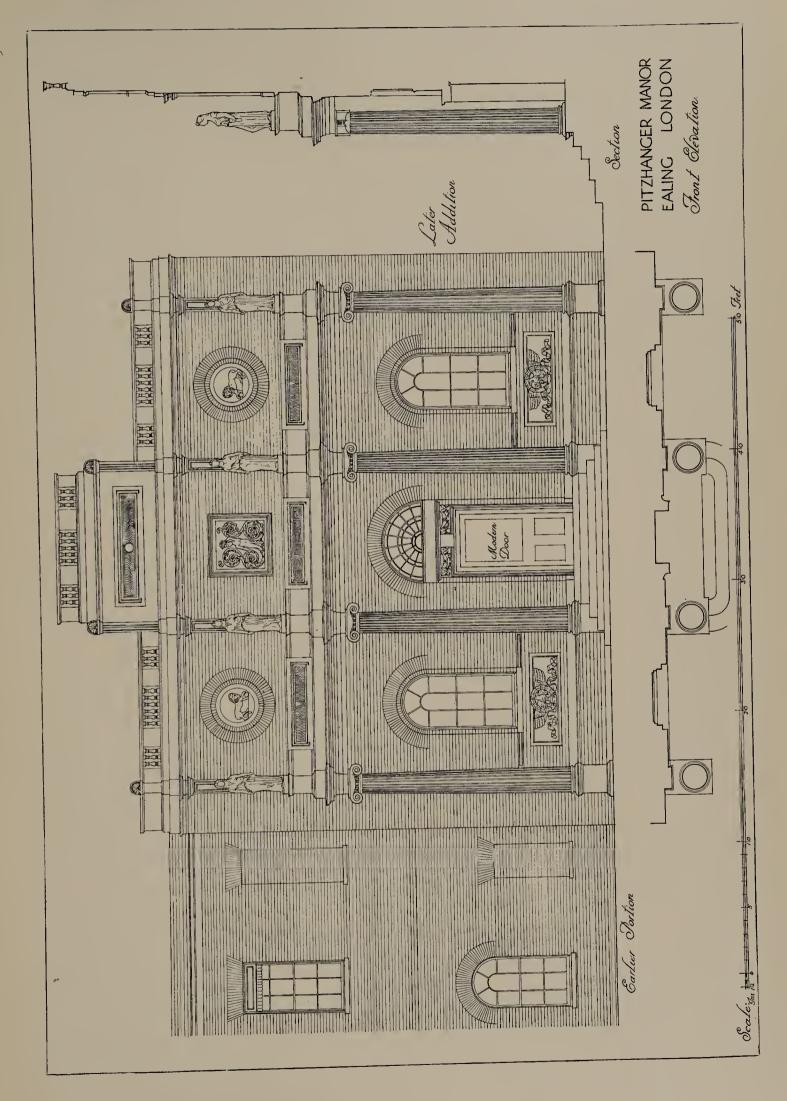




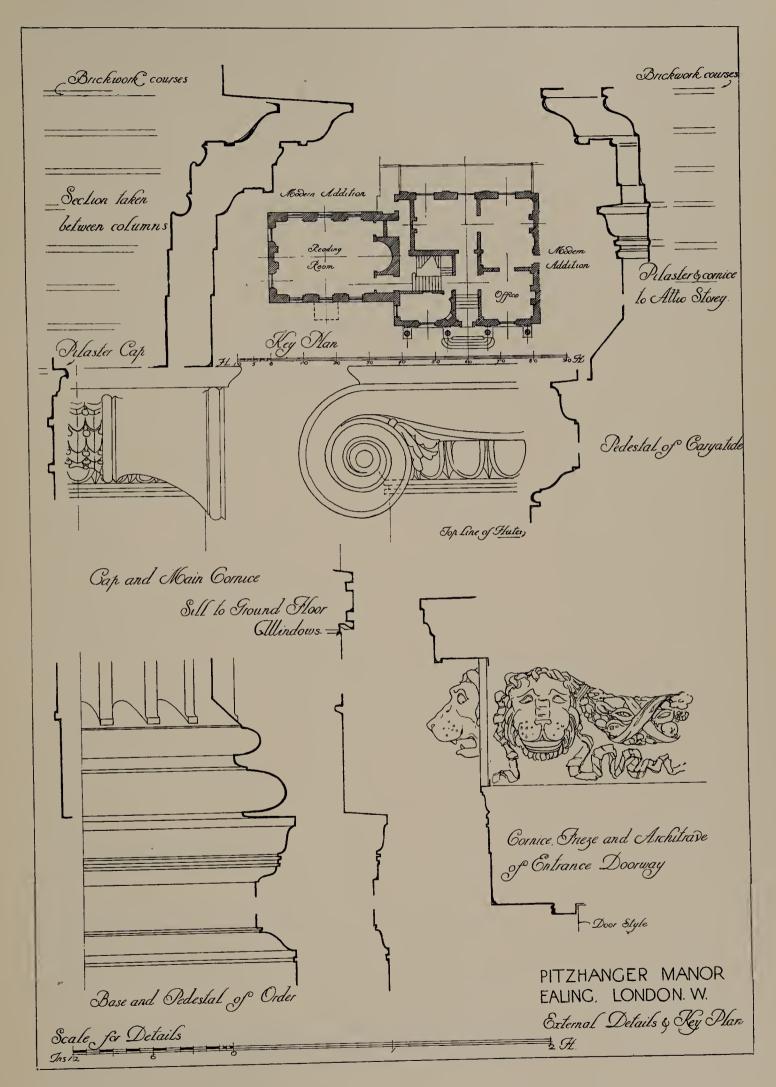




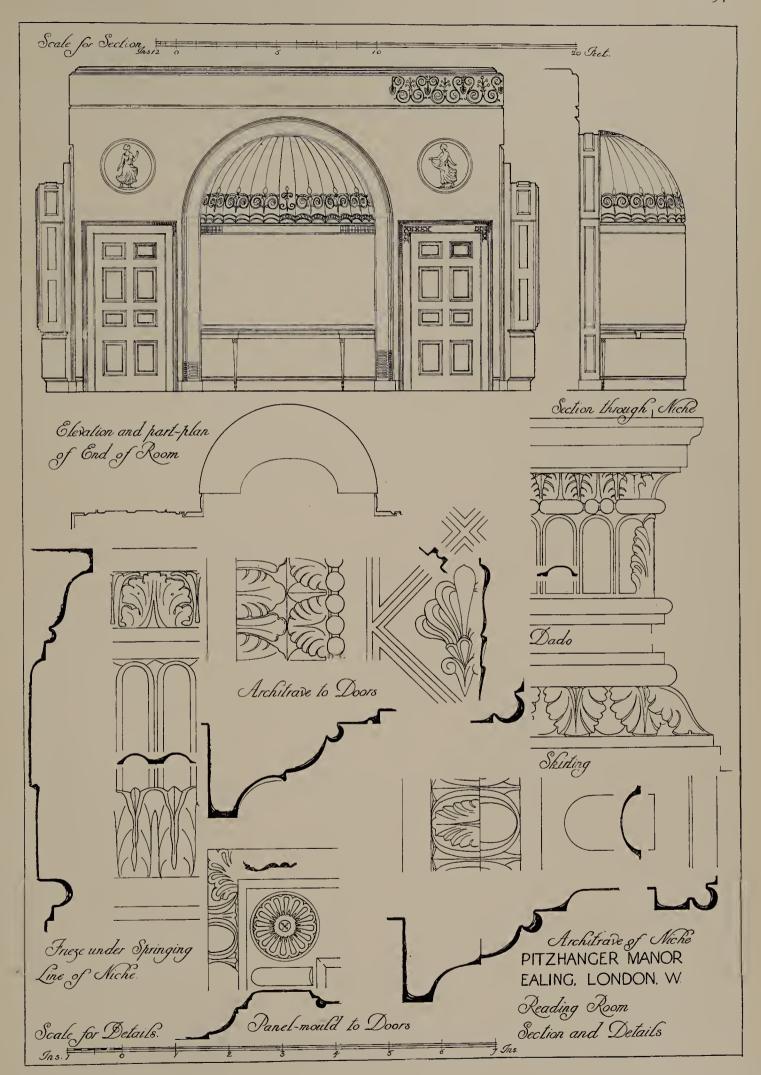




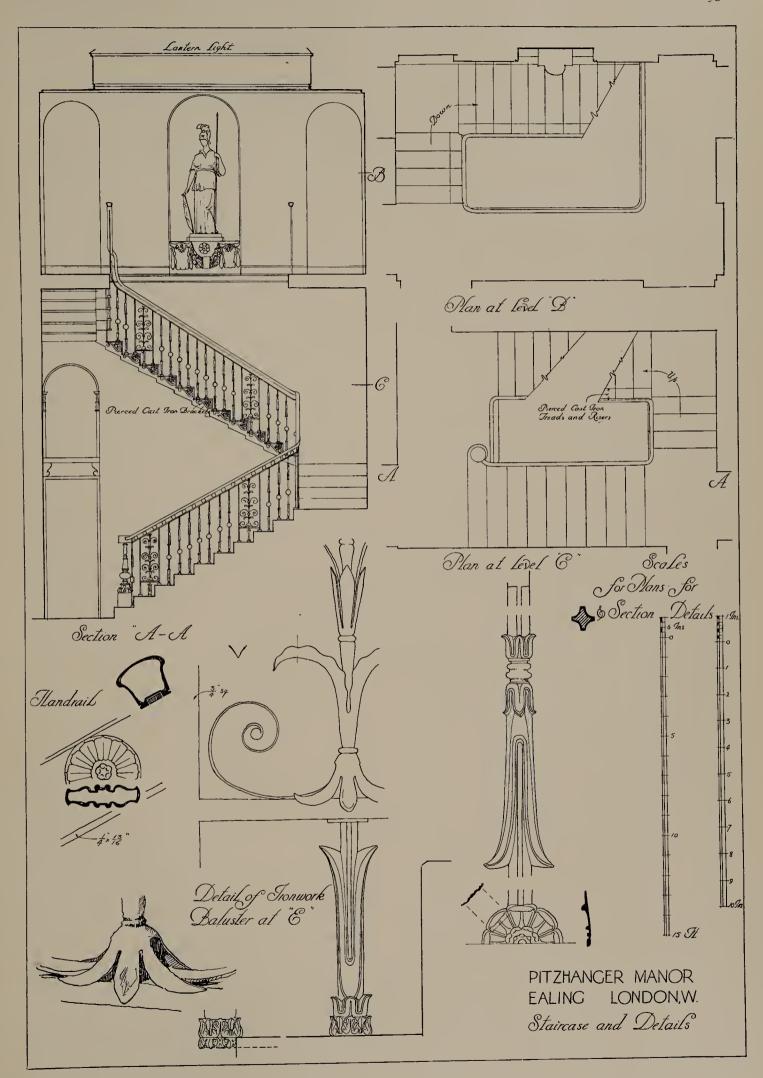




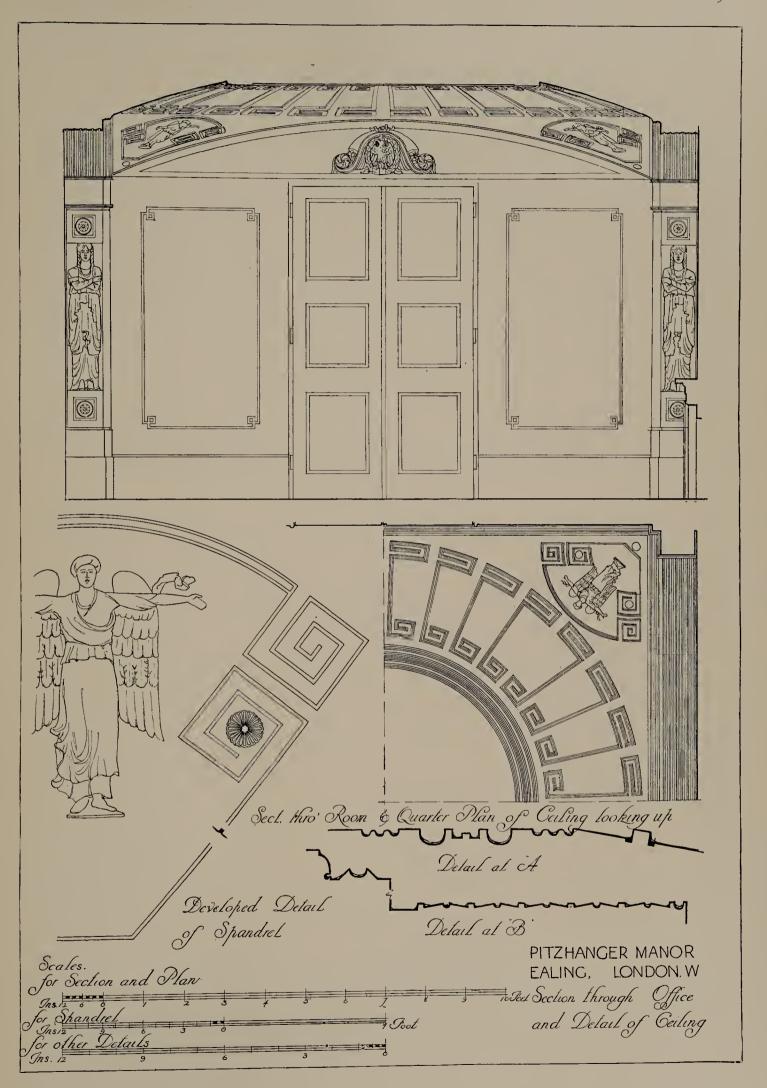




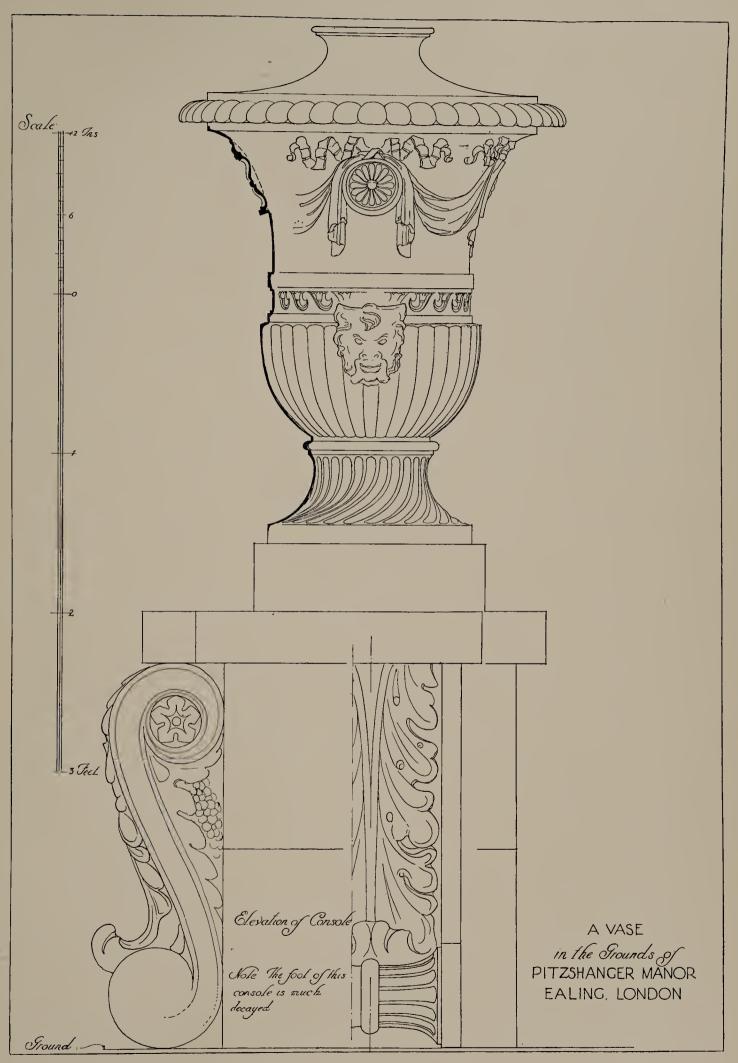




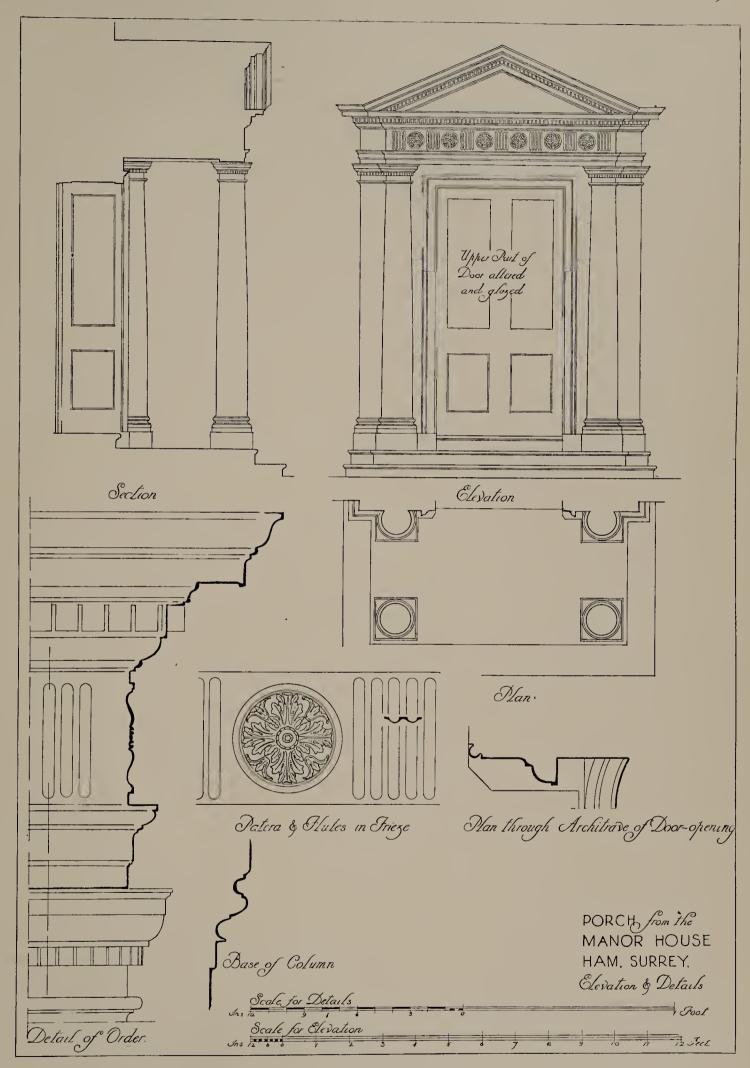




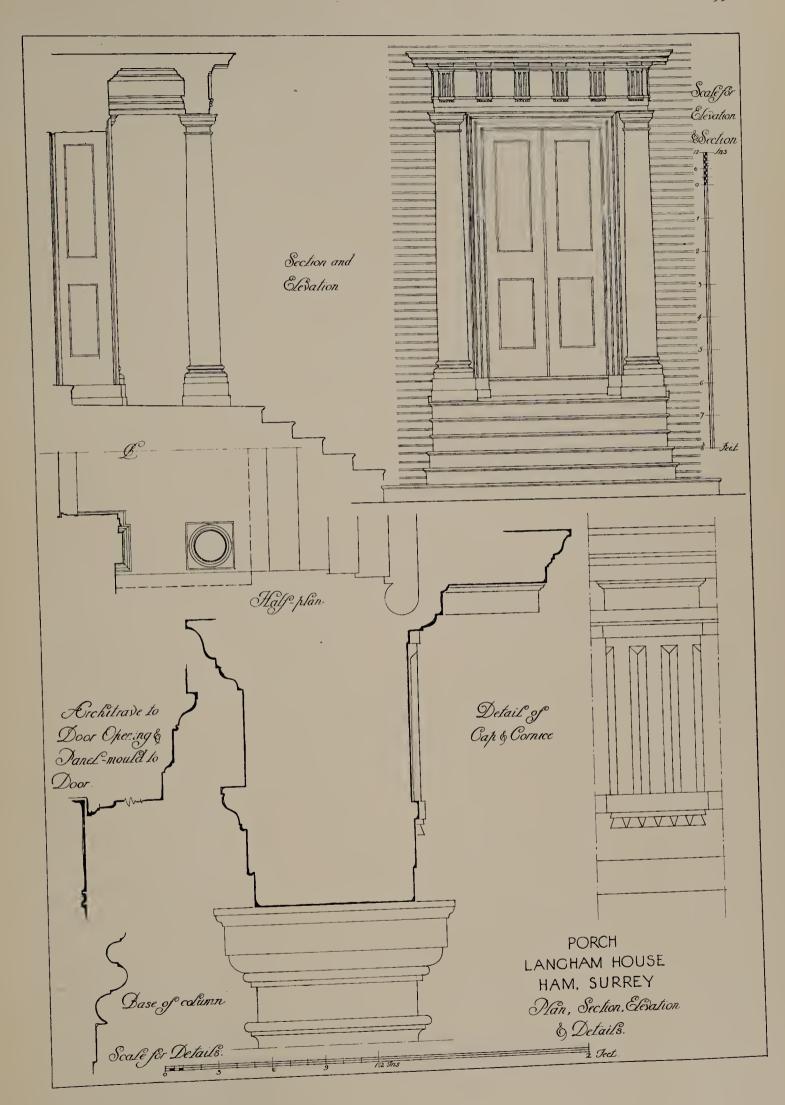




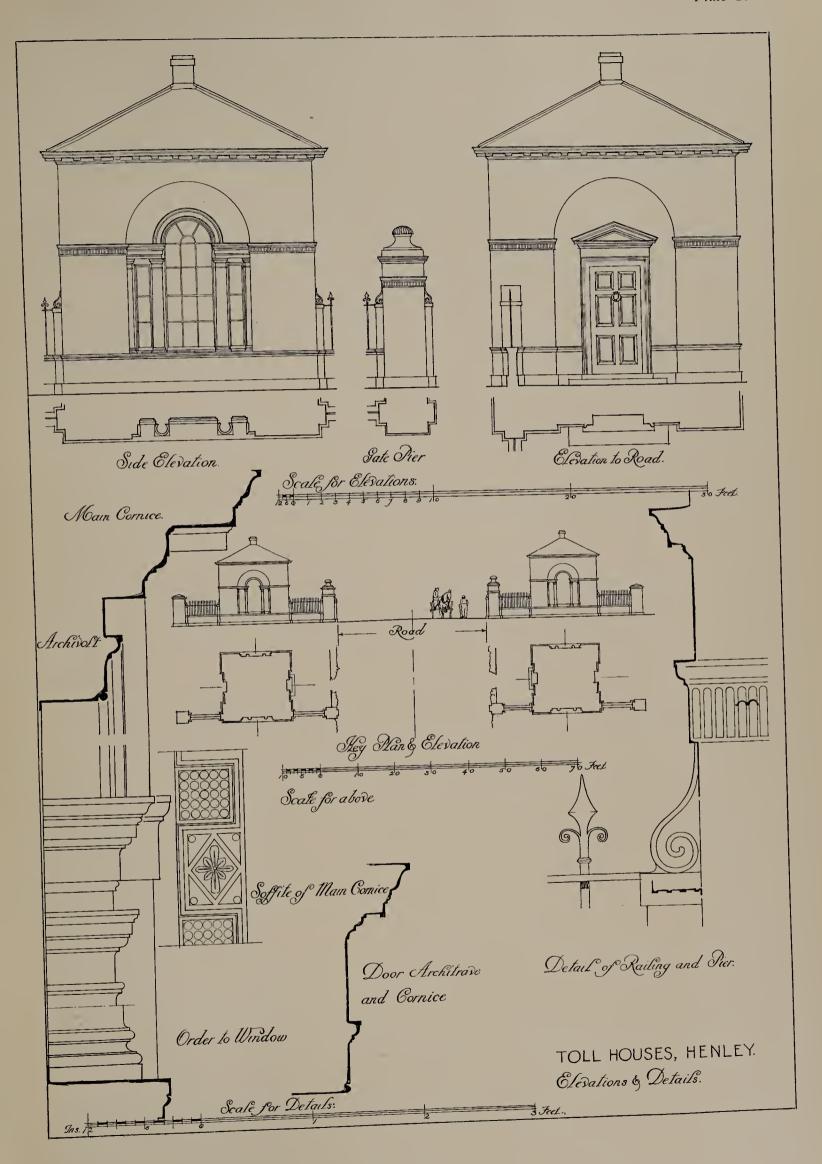


















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